



Velma L Watkins

January 4, 1920 - September 21, 2010

Velma (Wiesenbach) Watkins, age 90, formerly of Murphysboro, Illinois, passed away at 12:45 p.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2010, at the Havasu Regional Hospital in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, September 27, 2010, at Pettett Funeral Home with Rev. Earl Renshaw officiating and burial at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park. Friends may call from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday until the hour of services at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the United Methodist Church in Murphysboro or St. Michael's United Methodist Church in Lake Havasu City, AZ, especially to the Missionary or Youth Programs.

Velma was born on January 4, 1920, in Vergennes, Illinois, the daughter of George and Dola Wiesenbach. She attended school there and in Murphysboro. Velma married James Watkins on June 27, 1938, and he preceded her in death on June 14, 1981, in Murphysboro.

She was a devoted Christian and a former member of the United Methodist Church in Murphysboro. After moving to Lake Havasu City, she joined St. Michael's United Methodist Church. Velma worked tirelessly for her churches

including serving on various committees, working with United Methodist Women, arranging or coordinating dinners and rummage sales, baking bread for Sunday visitors, participating in a Walk to Emmaus, and raising money for missionaries and youth groups. Her special ministry was "Pennies from Heaven" which helped provide financial support for her missionary family in Zimbabwe. This past year, her penny donations also provided enough money to help feed many hungry families at Christmas time. In January of this year, for her 90th Birthday, Velma received enough pennies to total \$1000. She sent that money to help needy students with their school tuition.

If something needed to be done, the phrase, "ask Velma" was used a lot.

Her employment history consisted of working at various laundromats, including Todd's in Murphysboro and SIUC, before medical problems forced her retirement.

Mrs. Watkins began collecting salt and pepper shakers and depression glass by the hundreds, and graduated to collecting tea pots with just over one thousand in her collection.

In her spare time, she enjoyed bunco, bingo, and Mexican Train Dominos.

Velma was also the "World's Greatest Mother" and would sacrifice everything for her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom loved her very much. She was our "rock" and will be missed greatly.

Survivors include her son Harold Watkins of Bakersfield, CA; three daughters Nancy (Watkins) Nichols and her husband Ted Nichols of Lake Havasu City, AZ, Shirley (Watkins) Walker and her husband Dick Walker, and their dog, Shadow--Velma's buddy--of Lake Havasu City, AZ, Carol (Watkins) Wehmeyer of Murphysboro, and son in law Fred Wehmeyer of Murphysboro;

two granddaughters: Marcie (Wehmeyer) Mileur, and her husband, Joey Mileur, of Murphysboro; and Janice Watkins of Huntington Beach, CA;

two grandsons: Steve Nichols, and his wife, Renee Nichols, of Schaumburg, IL; and Tim Nichols and his wife, Sherry Nichols, of Joliet, IL;

one great granddaughter: Lauren Nichols, of Plainfield, IL;

five great grandsons: Michael Nichols serving in the Military; Tyler Nichols of Aurora, IL; Jeremy Nichols of Joliet, IL; Cody Wehmeyer and Carter Mileur, both of Murphysboro;

a niece, Peggy Schuster, of Murphysboro; a cousin, Floyd Arendell, of Overgard, AZ; a great God-child Brittney Zabodyn, of Anaheim, CA; and many, many dear friends.

Velma was preceded in death by her parents, two younger brothers, her husband, a daughter, Sherry Lynn Watkins, and a grandson, Scott Wehmeyer.

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18)

Tribute Wall



“ *Velma L Watkins*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM

LK

“ Ted and Nancy and all of Velma's family,

Please accept our sympathy as you say good-bye to Velma.

What a joy to know Velma! We first communicated with her in 1998, when she wrote to us asking for more information about the mission work we are involved in here in Zimbabwe . She would regularly write letters of encouragement to us, and help us with funds for various projects. In 2008 we were honored to actually meet her in Lake Havasu City, and hear her sing Pennies from Heaven while marching with her special umbrella, wearing her penny ear-rings. At that time she was 88 years old- what an example for us younger folks!

When we come home to the US every four years, we are reminded of the casual attitude that people have toward pennies. Very few people will bother to stop to pick one up, and many stores have a penny dish next to the till so that people don't have to search for a few pennies- or bother with them in their pockets. But Velma collected thousands of these coins with almost insignificant economic value when alone- but when added together made very significant impact on the lives of others: food at Christmas, help with paying school fees for the children of farm workers who know that the best chance they have of escaping their poverty is to send their children to a good school.

Yes, Velma helped us a lot- not only with the funds as mentioned, but by reminding us that each of us is called to do their part, not matter our age or other perceived hindrances. Working in a country with more than its share of challenges, Velma was an inspiration to us to continue doing what we can.

*Larry and Jane Kies
Africa University
Mutare Zimbabwe*

Larry and Jane Kies - October 06, 2010 at 10:09 AM

SJ

“ *My deepest sympathy and condolence for your loss. Velma was like my aunt, my mom, my grandma, but most of all she was my best friend, and sister in Christ. I will miss her and love her forever. In Christ's Love, Sandy*

Sandy Johnson - September 28, 2010 at 08:51 PM

MD

“ *Please accept my deepest sympathy and prayers on the lost of such a wonderful, loving, and giving woman. She always had a smile on her face, (no matter what) when she would greet people at St. Michale's church. I'm glad that she will be donating her teapots for her pennies from heaven. I look forward to that.*

One of my memories of her is that she loved to bake for the church bake sales.

She will definitely be missed.

God bless you all in your time of great sorrow.....Michelle DeForest

Michelle DeForest - September 27, 2010 at 05:54 PM

SC

“*Velma was dear to our heart playing bingo with her at the senior hall from making jam to just old joking around. Her quiet presence wonderful sense of humor humble smile and always witty stories will be remembered. We love her dearly and are so glad we were able to celebrate in her beautiful Birthday Tea Party at the church. Getting to know her beloved family and friends and most of all see all her wonderful recipes in the church cook book for UMW that will be published this Fall. Many hugs love and smiles to the family you are truly blessed to have such a wonderful Mom and we are blessed to have all the memories to cherish in our lives as well she will truly be missed.*

Sativa and Jason Castellucci - September 24, 2010 at 06:38 PM

CF

“*Watkins Family: It was very sad to hear of Velma's passing at church potluck Wed. night. Velma reminded me physically of my Mom in stature and looks. My Mom passed away in 1979. Velma always had a smile for everyone, and did so much behind the scenes that very few knew about. She will be sorely missed. Sincerely, Cec & Jim Fischer*

Cec & Jim Fischer - September 24, 2010 at 01:46 PM