



Ms. Virginia Lee Smith

October 17, 1938 - September 19, 2017

Virginia Lee Fowler "Jenny" was the only daughter born to Edna and Claude Fowler. She was a beautiful, graceful, caring, strong and independent human being with a heart of solid gold who later became my mother. She passed on September 19, 2017, six months ago today.

Born in the middle of fall, October 17, 1938, raised in Murphy NC alongside her two brothers John and Harry. She was a cheerleader, graduated Salutatorian and was voted "Best Dressed" from Murphy High School class of 1956. After attending the once all-girl University of Greensboro for a bit she returned home and later completed secretarial training. Fluent in shorthand and gifted with unmatched organization skills, she came to the Asheville area and began a career in the once dominate local industry of textiles, namely hosiery and carpeting.

After working in Swannanoa for a bit she started her longstanding career with American Enka (later becoming BASF) through which she formed life-long and loving friendships with many but most notably Norma Gaston and Patsy Howell. Jenny married the late Robert David Smith "Bob" on March 6, 1965 who also worked at American Enka as an engineer. They built a home in Averys Creek in 1969 and had me, their only daughter Heather Alicia Smith on May 25, 1972. A wiz at sewing, she economized by making the vast majority of her maternity clothes and later her daughters clothing from those amazing

vintage patterns from McCalls, Butterick and Simplicity. In 1975 Jenny became a single mother and worked incredibly hard. I was five years old when she enrolled me in my first baton class and shortly after my first ballet class and later my first baton competition and dance recital followed by many more years of competitions and recitals. She patiently sat through coaching sessions, making notes of her routines in shorthand and sewing costumes. Her specialities were pound cake, sweet potato casserole and a cake we called the "Hershey's Disappearing Cake" because there was never any left.

Jenny's loyalty to her friends, family and work family was unflinching. She retired from BASF in 2001 after a 40 year career in various administrative and supervisory capacities. As a result of her long-standing devotion to her job she had accumulated a lot of vacation time. Her love of Fall became intensely realistic when she began to take the entire month of October off to do whatever she pleased. Home improvement projects and rides on the Blue Ridge Parkway and into the national forests to look at the Fall color were the most popular. It was her absolute favorite time of year.

Jenny was a devout Christian who, when she could, she read her bible daily. She dedicated many hours and years as Treasurer of Long Shoals Baptist Church. She loved cats and hummingbirds, Neil Diamond, Sunday shopping with me followed by Barnes and Noble and Starbucks vanilla mochas and our yearly road trips to Atlanta for Christmas shopping. She taught me about old movies, she loved Broadway theatre, nighttime soaps (especially Dallas and Dynasty), Dancing With the Stars, Olympic figure skating and gymnastics, Robert Grisham and other suspense novels, home improvement projects (especially the do-it-yourself types), vanilla ice cream, butterflies, roses, and knitting, and towards the last little bit developed a fondness for the actor Gerard Butler.

She was a gentle soul with a beautiful smile and wonderful red hair. She was

mom. She was my world. Her journey to passing was significantly long, yet incredibly peaceful, I'd like to think it was just because she wanted to stay with me. I worry that she may have been afraid, and because she could no longer talk, I will never know. We had each other. She was my best friend and my hero and I will never be the same. I'm sure anyone reading this who's life was touched by her understands what a beautiful soul has passed on. She will never be forgotten.

Tribute Wall



“ *Ms. Virginia Lee Smith*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM