



Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"

July 12, 1924 - October 23, 2020

Big Stone Gap, VA / Pensacola, FL

Juanita Brown Thompson (Sam), 96, passed away on October 22, 2020, in Pensacola, Florida.

She was born July 12, 1924 in Ridgeway, Kentucky to Jack P. Brown and Verda Emily (Mary) Barker Brown. She graduated from Keokee High School in 1940, received her Associate of Arts degree from Hiwassee College in Madisonville, TN, earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, TN, and her Master of Education degree from Union College in Barbourville, KY. Sam worked at DELCO during World War II. After five years in Dayton, she moved back to Keokee where she married her lifelong sweetheart, Jay Thompson, on February 13, 1946. Sam taught high school in Keokee, elementary school in Calvin, VA, then finished her teaching career at Appalachia High School, retiring after forty-one years. When the Thompsons moved to Big Stone Gap, VA, Sam was an active member of the First Baptist Church. She was also a member of The Order of the Eastern Star, participating in local chapters wherever she moved throughout her life. She was initiated into Appalachia Chapter 26 in 1945, transferred to Big Stone Gap Chapter 157, then Ensley Chapter 244 when she moved to Florida in 2002. Sam volunteered at the hospital in Big Stone Gap and also served at the John Fox, Jr. museum. After relocating to Pensacola, she continued her volunteer work at West Florida Hospital and helped whenever needed at Azalea Trace, her residence for 18 years.

She was preceded in death by her husband, James Gillis Thompson, Jr., with whom she shared 38 years of marriage before he passed away in 1984. Sam is also preceded by her father, Jack; her mother, Verda Mary; her stepfather, James G. Thompson, Sr.; her sisters, Shirley Brown Collier (Curt Collier), Freda Thompson Snodgrass, and Nelda Thompson Morris; and her brothers, Robert Thompson, Charles Thompson, Sr., and Delano Thompson.

Sam is survived by her daughter, Jill Thompson White and son-in-law, George Jeffrey

White of Pensacola, Florida; her grandsons, James Christopher Greene and his wife Trinh, of Greenville, SC, John Andrew Greene and his wife Shauna, of Atlanta, GA, and Jeffrey Barker White of Baltimore, MD and his partner, Michaela Sulka; her great-grandchildren, Julia Elizabeth Greene and James Christopher Greene, Jr. (JC) of Greenville, SC and John Alexander Greene (Xander) of Atlanta, GA; her niece Rhonda Morris Yates and her husband Walter, of Wilmington, NC; her foster son Alan Collier and his wife Ronda, of Norton, VA; her foster daughter Robin Tackett and her husband Bo of Keokee, VA; great grandsons, Aaron Collier (Shauna) of Norton, VA and Joe Collier of Big Stone Gap; and sisters-in-law Rose Thompson of Northview, Michigan and Joyce Thompson of Dayton, Ohio. She leaves behind many nieces, nephews, and adopted grandchildren. Her Azalea Trace family of friends and caregivers were a blessing to all of us.

There will not be a funeral service at this time due to COVID.

A graveside service will be held for family only at Powell Valley Memorial Gardens. A memorial service will also be held at Azalea Trace Retirement Community at a future date.

Cards or notes of condolences may be sent to her daughter at 1407 N. Baylen St., Pensacola, FL 32501. If you would like to make a donation in her name, please select your charity of choice.

You may go online to view the obituary, sign the guest registry or leave the family a condolence at www.holdingfuneralhome.com

Holding Funeral Home is honored to serve the Thompson family.

Cemetery Details

Powell Valley Memorial Gardens

5650 Powell Valley Road
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

Tribute Wall

WQ

“ *I just heard about Mrs. Thompson's passing. She was the only teacher who never paddled me. However, she would make me do a lot of extra writing. Well deserved I might add. She was - is - and will always be one of my favorites. I hope my grammar is appropriate or I'm sure she would have corrected me. Even in Heaven I bet she is correcting everyone's grammar and spelling. She was the Best! Rest in Peace Mrs. Thompson ...*

William R. " Bill " Quinley

William R. Quinley - November 19, 2020 at 12:34 PM

DS

So true! She was a knowledgeable and talented educator! Congrats! On a job, well/done!!!

Doris Ann Sproles - April 11, 2021 at 03:04 PM

DE

You, will be missed, by many! Juanita Thompson!

Doris Ann Elliott - April 11, 2021 at 03:50 PM

DE

You were one of the most caring educators!

Doris Ann Elliott - April 11, 2021 at 03:53 PM

DE

Thank you for caring about our education! You, will be missed! Our loss and Heaven's gain!

Doris Ann Elliott - April 11, 2021 at 03:56 PM

DE

Men, came and removed a portion of our wire fence, to cut a tree! Never put it back up! Ralph, must do it!

Doris Ann Elliott - April 11, 2021 at 03:59 PM

KK

“ *Kathy Kleineick lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"*



Kathy Kleineick - November 03, 2020 at 11:00 AM

SF

“ Susie Fig lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"



Susie Fig - October 30, 2020 at 12:52 AM

 Michael Dalton

“ Jill,
I was Sam's neighbor here in BSG. Our yards joined each other. I bought the old Grubbs house. The tornado destroyed the house and I built a new one in the same place. All these years I have always said Sam was the best neighbor I've had. Too many memories to post here! I was sad when she moved yet knowing you had her close to you. I was honored to think of her as my adopted grandmother. My thoughts and prayers are with you!
Michael K. Dalton

Michael Dalton - October 29, 2020 at 08:35 PM

PM

“ Jill,
Your mother lived a wonderful life. May the good Lord welcome her with open arms. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Be well.
Your Powell Valley HS friend,
Phil Mullins

Phil G Mullins - October 28, 2020 at 05:50 AM

AM

“ Sam was one of my mother's best friends. I don't think I ever saw her without a smile on her face. Back in the mid/late 80s, I took a vacation trip to Edisto Island with my parents, the Weatherlys, Arline Sharpe, & Sam. Sam decided to ride with me on the trip down. We had a great time. She liked the California Raisin figurines I had on the dashboard. She found a larger version of one of the figurines later & gave it to me to add to my dashboard collection. So every time I see a California Raisin, it reminds me of Sam & makes me smile. Condolences to the family. She was such a special lady.

Ann Marrs - October 27, 2020 at 11:20 AM

FG

“ I met Juanita in August 1969 when I came to Appalachia High School to teach English. I know immediately that she was a "live wire" and that we would be good friends. That faculty was a family and Juanita was one of those who knew how to keep a family talking and working together. I never saw her angry enough to quit, though she could lose her temper. When she had a minute to think, she always came back to the true course of caring and forgiving.

Some of my fondest memories of her come from her having been a member of my "car pool" to school and home in the evening., Those trips were filled with humor, observations, and laughter. These adventures wee shared by Dorothy Gwaldis, Grace Murphy, Anne Hunter, Wilma Brooks, and Doris Berta, all of whom were "characters of note" themselves. Many serious problems were solved but humor and laughter took center stage. The trips to and from school were always adventures that were refreshing and enjoyable. For example, one morning where we arrived for the day, Jack Sizemore was looking out the window and watched all of us pile out of my old Chevrolet Caprice. When we went inside the building, he began laughing and compared us to the clowns piling out of the little car in the circus! We all had a good laugh.

Juanita loved teaching, but she loved her students more. She worked very hard to help those who were the underdogs. They had a special place in her heart, and she would do anything and everythibng she could to motivate and accelerate a student., There are hundreds of successful adults who attribute their successes in life to Mrs. Thompson who would not give up on them. She embodied true love and kindness.

Juanita, or "Lackawanna" as I jokingly called her in private impressed me with her joy in lkfe and her generosity of sharing and working for the benefit of others. She always knew what to say or do in those tough situation that confound us at times. I never knew her to stand back and ignore someone, a student or colleague, who was hurting either physically or emotionally. She was a pillar of courage, strength, and faith to those who knew her. I shall miss her greatly, but I rejoice in that I had the opportunity to know her and to share time and work with her. She is one of the great ones., and now she has moved on to her reward which will be great and wonderful.

Frank L. Gentry

Frank L. Gentry - October 24, 2020 at 10:33 PM

PF

“ Pamela Fawbush lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"



Pamela Fawbush - October 24, 2020 at 09:09 PM



“ I have so many memories with your mom and you. She loved to bowl and was so friendly. My my is 92 and lives at the Laurals in Wise. Dad passed in 91. Very sorry hear this and prayers and Blessings to you
Midge Hall and Janet Hall Wilson



Janet Wilson - October 24, 2020 at 08:33 PM



“ Kathy Honeycutt lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"



Kathy Honeycutt - October 24, 2020 at 08:05 PM



“ Enjoyed the year. I taught with you at Appalachia. Praying for you all at this time.
Love , Raymond and Beulah Davidson

Raymond Davidson - October 24, 2020 at 02:00 PM



“ Terinita Fortner lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"



Terinita Fortner - October 24, 2020 at 11:17 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. Juanita was a great teacher and was well respected by the students at Appalachia High School.
Ralph and Shirley Morrison Fisher



Shirley Morrison Fisher - October 24, 2020 at 10:56 AM

LB

“ I have wonderful memories of Sam!! Oh the laughter, when she and my mom, Beulah Bobrosky, got together!! Prayers of peace for Jill and family. Linda

Linda Bobrosky - October 24, 2020 at 07:32 AM

C'

“ I had this awesome woman in the 80's. She was fair & consistent. Many people learned a lot from her. Not just in English class. But how a classy, intelligent, woman should be..

Connie Jones '89 - October 24, 2020 at 05:30 AM



“ She was a wonderful English Teacher at AHS, in fact the very best I had in high school. On our wedding night, Debbie and I feasted on a pizza from Dujai's Carryout. I had thought she, like all my other teachers, was long since gone. As sad as her passing is, I thank the Almighty God that she lived as long and, I'm sure, as usefully as she did.
We should ALL be so fortunate in every way!

Glenn R. Tankersley - October 23, 2020 at 10:56 PM

PR

She was truly amazing and the kindest person I have ever known

Patricia Newton Rap - October 24, 2020 at 02:07 AM

CB

Mrs Thompson was one of my favorite teachers. She was such a caring and involved lady. RIP

Carolyn Bramlett - October 25, 2020 at 06:32 AM



“ Rest in Peace, Juanita Thompson (Sam)

Agnes Bailey and Joyce Bailey Gladstone



Joyce Bailey Gladstone - October 23, 2020 at 08:12 PM

TW

“ Mrs. "T" (as most of us at AHS in 1977 called her), was my senior homeroom and 5th period English teacher! She was one of three teachers, that I absolutely loved! Thank You Mrs. T and fly high❤️🌹

Tammie Sizemore Wade - October 23, 2020 at 06:16 PM

AB

“ Loved having her as a wonderful teacher at Appalachia. High School 1963-64. She was such a pleasure to know and was so very influential to our Junior and Senior class.

Allison Boyd - October 23, 2020 at 06:06 PM

LK

“ Lisa Kirk lit a candle in memory of Juanita Brown Thompson "Sam"



Lisa Kirk - October 23, 2020 at 05:20 PM

DD

“ I had Mrs Thompson as a teacher in 1971. I loved her personality and she dressed so cool. She was a great teacher. She deserved a long life. Condolences to her family.

Deanna Garland (Day) - October 23, 2020 at 05:07 PM