



Thelma Jean Skeen

March 5, 1955 - March 2, 2026

Thelma Jean (Durham) Skeen, age 70, of Kingsport, Tennessee, passed away peacefully after a lengthy illness.

Born on March 5, 1955, in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, Thelma was the beloved daughter of George and Ruth Durham. From an early age, she carried within her a strength, kindness, and spark that would define the way she lived her life.

A traditional obituary simply cannot capture what Thelma meant to the people who knew her. If you were fortunate enough to meet her, you gained a friend for life. She had a heart of gold, a quick wit, and a way of making everyone feel welcome. Her laughter was contagious, and she never missed an opportunity to share a joke or brighten someone's day.

Thelma was a woman ahead of her time. She worked in construction, helping build bridges in Big Stone Gap and Weber City, Virginia — work she was immensely proud of. She never shied away from hard labor and often held positions in fields traditionally dominated by men. Her strength and determination were part of who she was. For a time, she also worked as a truck driver, forming lasting friendships along the way. Some of her most treasured memories were the long hauls she shared with her daughter, Julie, spending precious time together on the open road.

After meeting the love of her life, her late husband Dickie, Thelma chose to step away from the physically demanding jobs. She devoted herself fully to her home and family, becoming the heart of the household. She also gave her time to volunteer work, always looking for ways to help others.

To know Thelma was to know good cooking. She poured love into every meal she prepared. As a homemaker, she made sure her family was cared for in every way, cooking meals and snacks daily with pride and devotion. Her kitchen was more than a place to eat — it was a place of warmth, laughter, and togetherness.

Her talents extended far beyond the kitchen. Thelma could sew just about anything, creating special pieces for family and friends that will be cherished for years to come. But perhaps what most people remember is her extraordinary gift for gardening. She grew the most beautiful flowers, tending to them with patience and pride. She delighted in sharing bouquets made from her own yard, effortlessly arranging stunning flowers at a moment's notice. Gardening wasn't just a hobby — it was a reflection of her nurturing spirit. She continued to care for her flowers until she was no longer able, holding onto the joy it brought her for as long as she could.

Thelma leaves behind a legacy of love, strength, laughter, and generosity. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her, but the lessons she taught and the love she gave will live on in the hearts of her family and friends forever.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, James Skeen; and her siblings, Dennis Durham, Andy Durham, Charlie Durham, Lacy Bolling, and Betty Sue Boggs.

She is survived by her daughter, Julie Ashens; her special stepchildren, Michael Skeen, Beth Skeen, and Tracy Skeen; her granddaughter, Cheyenne Ashens; her special step grandchildren, River and Noah Skeen, Tyler and Zach Vorp, and Andrew, Taylor, and Josh Skeen; her brothers, Lennie Durham, Kirby Durham, Curtis Durham, Terry Durham, Paul Bolling, and her sisters, Alice Davidson, Emma Lou Waddell, and Sabrina Durham.

A graveside service will be held at Noon on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the Skeen Cemetery. Those attending are asked to meet at Holding Funeral Home at 11:30 to go in procession.

Previous Events

Graveside Services

MAR 7. 12:00 PM (ET)

Skeen Cemetery

Powell Valley Rd

Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

Tribute Wall

DB

“ I am so sorry to hear of Thelma’s passing. I remember her fondly as a loving, caring friend. My condolences to the family.

Darlene Bradford - March 06 at 03:25 PM

RS

“ I am so sorry to hear about Thelma's passing. She is in God's loving arms and at rest. My condolences to the family. Sending love, hugs, and prayers. Love always cousin. Raymona Simpson

Raymona Simpson - March 05 at 07:52 PM

D(

“ DeAnna Montes (Jones) purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Thelma Jean Skeen.



DeAnna Montes (Jones) - March 04 at 12:41 PM