



Ella Mae Smith

November 14, 1947 - February 28, 2026

Ella Mae Smith was born on November 14, 1947, in Leesburg, Georgia, to the late Ned Lee and Charity Gatson. She was raised in a close-knit family alongside eight brothers and two sisters, a bond that exemplified love, unity, and togetherness—values she carried with her throughout her life.

Ella began her career as a beautician at Erie's Salon, where she faithfully served for over five years. She later transitioned to Rush Hospital, working in the laundry department. Through her dedication and strong work ethic, she remained there until her retirement, where she was honored and celebrated for her years of service.

At the young age of 17, Ella found love and married Jerry Lee Smith, who was 19, on August 15, 1965, in Leesburg, Georgia. The couple later relocated to Chicago during the historic Blizzard of 1967, where they built a life centered on love and family. Together, they were blessed with four children: Alphonso, Pamela, Jermaine, and Sirmichael.

Ella was a devoted mother, grandmother, and matriarch who loved deeply and cared for others selflessly. In her adult years, she faithfully served under the

leadership of Rev. Edward J. Morris Sr. at Parkway Gardens Christian Church and Soul Reviving

Missionary Baptist Church.

Ella will be remembered for her love of cooking, her servant's heart, and her willingness to care for others at any time. Her life reflected compassion, generosity, and unwavering faith. She was born a Gatson, became a Smith, and will forever be remembered as a child of God.

Ella Mae Smith was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jerry Lee Smith; and her siblings: Eddie Gatson, Ed Jones, Inzie Gatson, Bennie Gatson, Willie Gatson, Paul Gatson, Kelcey Gatson, Nettie Mae Porter, Rosy Kent, Dot Dell Gatson, Kelvin Milledge, Louise George Bell, and Rosetta Mitchell.

She leaves to cherish her devoted memory children: Alphonso (wife) Ramana Smith, Pamela Smith, Jermaine Smith, and Sirmichael Smith. She was a proud and loving grandmother to Alphonso Smith Jr., Quentin Smith, Lakeshia Smith, Elijah Smith, Amiir Smith, Jasmine Smith, Ashanti Smith, Camille Smith, Courtney Smith, and Alyssa Smith. She was also blessed with great-grandchildren: Aamanee Smith, Darion Smith, Legendary Smith, Terry Stapleton, and Terrell Stapleton.

Ella Mae Smith is also survived by her beloved sister, Mildred Mack; her brother, Curtis Gatson; her Milledge brothers and sister; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, and dear friends.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 21. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Calahan Funeral Home - Legacy Center
7046 S. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60621

Funeral Service

MAR 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Calahan Funeral Home - Legacy Center
7046 S. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60621

Tribute Wall

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“ To the smith family may God continue to bless and protect and keep you with the peace that passes all understanding .Her my aunt Ella Mae wisdom and knowledge will be greatly missed and greatly appreciated your niece Tina and Elmira and Gatson family Love you Much the Hall's

Tina - March 17 at 12:41 PM

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“ (From Atlanta GA) purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Ella Mae Smith.



(From Atlanta GA) - March 16 at 04:41 PM