



Mrs. Ora Lee Watkins

May 31, 1933 - May 9, 2025

Mrs. Ora Lee Watkins, 91, of Peoria, IL, peacefully transitioned into eternity on Friday, May 9, 2025 at 1:17 am at OSF Richard Owens Hospice Home.

Born on May 31, 1933, in Newport, Arkansas, to Othell McKenzie and Lilly McDonald, Ora Lee married James Watkins in 1960, embarking on a journey filled with love and compassion.

Throughout her long and vibrant life, Ora Lee embraced every moment, even as her health began to decline. She found immense joy in playing bingo and spades, relished watching *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza*, and cherished the music of Tyrone Davis and Johnny Taylor. Her outgoing spirit made her the life of the party; she was always ready for the next adventure.

Ora leaves behind a rich legacy of love and cherished memories. She is survived by one son, James Watkins Jr.; three daughters, Annette McDonald, Jatou Watkins, and Regina (Anthony) Miller who were her pride and joy; grand-daughters, Melissa (James) Sashington, Tanica McDonald and great-grandson, Amin Wires all whom she raised; and special son-in-law, Michael Welch.

Ora Lee played a pivotal role in the lives of her 13 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and numerous great-great-grandchildren. She also leaves to

cherish her memories a treasured circle of nieces, nephews, and friends. A heartfelt acknowledgment goes to the Cagle Family, whose close bond with her brought her great joy.

Ora Lee is preceded in death by her parents, her brother Thurlee McDonald, daughter Velma Lee McDonald, son Tony Eugene Watkins, two grandchildren Canosha Butler, and Gregory Harris, two great-grandchildren, Kensey Ross Jr., Youlandice Simmons, and one great-great-grandchild Daryl Miller, Jr.

Ora Lee dedicated 72 years of her life raising her children and grandchildren, never wavered in doing so.

She would always say to us "take care of the babies". Ora Lee would fondly say, "Life doesn't owe me anything, my life is full and wonderful." Her spirit will continue to inspire and uplift everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.

A celebration of Ora Lee's remarkable life will be held at 11 am on Friday, May 16, 2025 at Cumerford Clary Funeral Home, 428 W. McClure Avenue, with a visitation beginning at 10 am. Pastor Raymond Golden will officiate.

Simons Mortuary has been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at SimonsMortuary.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 16. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Cumerford-Clary Funeral Home Chapel
428 W. McClure Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Celebration of Life

MAY 16. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

Cumerford-Clary Funeral Home Chapel
428 W. McClure Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Tribute Wall



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Ora Lee Watkins*



Simons Mortuary - May 14, 2025 at 08:07 PM

VG

“ *Very sorry for yall loss my friend's. RIH*



Vicky L Gagliardi - May 22, 2025 at 06:31 PM

BC

“ *Brenda D Cayson lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins*



Brenda D Cayson - May 22, 2025 at 09:30 AM

CJ

“ *You will be truly missed BEAUTIFUL QUEEN*

Conswalla Johnson - May 20, 2025 at 12:06 AM

AL

“ You was a mother to me and my sister we truly love you

Annette Lucy - May 15, 2025 at 10:59 PM

NE

“ Love you always!!
Neicy Cagle & family 🌹🌹🌹🌹🌹



Neicy - May 15, 2025 at 05:13 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Ora Lee Watkins.



May 14, 2025 at 01:19 PM

FP

“ Frank Parker lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins



Frank Parker - May 13, 2025 at 11:17 PM

WF

Rest n peace Miss Ora Lee

Willielette Fortney - May 14, 2025 at 09:03 PM

WF

🙏 for your family

Willielette Fortney - May 14, 2025 at 09:04 PM

BI

“ My condolences to the Family of Mrs Ora Lee Watkins. I know she will always be missed. May Mrs Ora Lee. Watkins RIP



Brenda J Idreez - May 13, 2025 at 07:42 PM

DB

“ Dorothea Banks-Burse lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins



Dorothea Banks-Burse - May 13, 2025 at 02:56 PM

SR

“ Shirley Robertson lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins



Shirley Robertson - May 13, 2025 at 01:24 PM

SR

“ I'll miss those little talks we had. But I'll still have those memories. I'll never forget you and carry some of that advice you gave me, the rest of my life 🌹🌹🌹🌹🌹

Shirley Robertson - May 13, 2025 at 01:23 PM

JM

“ *Im glad i got the chance to meet u Granny Grand. Take ur rest and continue to watch over the family.*

Jeanette McDonald - May 12, 2025 at 09:52 PM

MP

“ *Mancy Pittman sent a virtual gift in memory of Ora Watkins*



Mancy Pittman - May 12, 2025 at 08:22 PM

KI

“ *Kirsten lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins*



Kirsten - May 12, 2025 at 12:45 PM

B(

“ *Brenda D Cayson (Rudd) lit a candle in memory of Ora Watkins*



Brenda D Cayson (Rudd) - May 10, 2025 at 09:38 AM

MS

“ *My Grandmother*

u were my World, and I was your first Grandchild, so we held a Bond like no other, Gurl I'm so lost without you, You don't even know, I'm just Thankful that I had over 50yrs with you, To love on you and kiss all over you, and to show you that I appreciated you, So you fly high baby kiss my kids for me and tell them I Luv em, Kensey is going to be glad to see you, We gon be alright Momma, Get your rest baby, We Luv you.

Melissa Sashington - May 10, 2025 at 01:05 AM