



## Mary Ellen Jones

September 25, 1941 - January 16, 2020

Mary Ellen Jones, 78, of Salem, danced back into her husband's arms at 1:04 AM on January 16th 2020 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Mary Ellen was born to Hershel and Alma Mae (Witbracht) Gordon in the small town of Eden, Illinois. She attended Eden, one-room, Grade School and graduated 8th grade with her four other classmates. She went on to attend Sparta High School, where she met the love of her life, Gerald "Jerry" Jones. She graduated in 1959, at which time; her life-long aspiration was to become an airline stewardess. She moved to Des Moines, Iowa to pursue this dream, only to be told she was "just too short." She opted to stay a while and worked at a soda fountain until she landed a job as a secretary. During this time, Jerry wrote her weekly love letters. He ultimately followed her there and "brought her home." They married June 25th 1960 in Sparta, Illinois. Over the next two years, they began their beautiful family.

When her girls were young, she worked as their school's secretary. That job helped her find her calling and in 1972, she decided to attend college to become a teacher. She graduated from Belleville Area College in 1974 and completed her bachelor's degree at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1978. She was the first in her family to obtain a college degree. Her, Jerry, and the girls moved to Salem, Illinois in 1976 with World Color Press and she went on to enrich the lives of students at Franklin Park Middle School. She taught

English and was passionate about reading and ensured her children and grandchildren all spoke with impeccable grammar. She doted on her students and took pride in the accomplishments they achieved. Upon Jerry's retirement in 1988, they moved to Englewood, Florida where she continued to teach until 2000. When she learned she was going to be a great-grandma she insisted they move back to Illinois in 2002.

Throughout her life, Mary Ellen loved reading and watching lifetime movies. However, her true passion was creating beautiful works of art that her family will continue to cherish. She also loved golfing with Jerry and her gal pals, traveling, and dancing. Her and Jerry would enter, and win, jitterbug contests or just dance in the living room on any given day.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, January 25th at 5:00 pm at the Salem Elks Lodge with Pastor Trent Ice officiating. Memorials may be made in Mary Ellen's name to the Alzheimer's Association Greater Missouri Chapter or to Odin Healthcare's activity department and received at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and Cremation Services at 235 North Sycamore Street Centralia, Illinois 62801, (618)532-3523, who is honored to be of service to the Jones Family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) and also on the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home Facebook Page.

Mary Ellen is survived by daughters; Rebecca "Becky" Purcell, Lauren Lusch, Grandchildren; Whitney Purcell and spouse Walter Gallia, Caleb Lusch and wife Abbey, Callie Lusch and fiancé Michael "Shad" Ray, Great-grandchildren; Anabella Gallia, Eden Gallia, and Atticus Lusch, Brother; Tommy Gordon and wife Linda, Sister In-laws; June and husband Tommy Ramsey and Shirley Jones as well as many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; Hershel and Alma Mae Gordon, Husband; Gerald Jones, Sister; Pat Baue, and Brother in-law; Leroy Jones.



# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JAN **25**. 5:00 PM (CT)

Salem Elks Lodge 1678  
315 North Broadway  
Salem, IL 62881

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Mary Ellen Jones*



**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - January 20, 2020 at 06:28 PM

CG

*The most beautiful tribute to a beautiful woman! My heart goes out to you Becky and Lauren as well as Whitney, Caleb, Callie, Bella and Eden. Hold on to these precious memories! And hold on to each other. Love each and every one of you  
God be with all of you!*

**Cheri Griffith** - January 22, 2020 at 10:54 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen Jones.*



January 24, 2020 at 02:03 PM

KR

“ *Becky...I love the video of old family pictures and music. Your mom led a life well lived, blessed with lots of love and laughter. Certainly one to celebrate. I see you reflected in your mom's eyes and smile. I'm praying for comfort for you and hoping all those memories that you keep so close in your heart bring a smile to your face each time you recall your mom. As long as you hold her close in your heart she will always be with you.*

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**Kathy Ruscher** - January 22, 2020 at 03:08 PM

MS

“ *A beautiful tribute for a Mom and Grandma! She was a beautiful soul. Prayers of comfort and peace to your family.*

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**Mary Ann Smith** - January 22, 2020 at 08:16 AM

CT

“ *Becky and Lauren and families: I was shocked and saddened when I saw the obituary of your Mom. Mary Ellen and I were very good friends and enjoyed each other's company in whatever we did. We traveled to Florida together to see the lot where she and Jerry were going to build and enjoyed sightseeing in the area. She's always been one of my most cherished friends though we didn't see each other in later years. Distance doesn't allow much in the way to get together. I'm so sorry you've lost your Mom and I've lost a good friend. With love and prayers for your family.*  
*Cheryl Thomas*

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**Cheryl Thomas** - January 18, 2020 at 08:19 PM

BP

*Thank you Cheryl. She thought highly of you as well.*

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**Becky Purcell** - January 19, 2020 at 10:34 PM

LL

*Thank you so much Cheryl. We greatly appreciate it*

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**Lauren Lusch** - January 20, 2020 at 02:12 PM

MV

“*Mary Ellen was a dear part of our family. She was our babysitter and a "mother's helper during her high school days. Her sweet and fun nature brought her close to everyone she met. She was a talented and giving person who brought joy and inspiration to others. May God bless this special family as they have loved and honored her through her illness; and now move forward with Mary's beautiful light shining through them.*



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**Marvalee Vuichard** - January 17, 2020 at 11:20 AM

BP

*Thank you so much! Mom always had a smile and kind word for everyone.*

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**Becky Purcell** - January 19, 2020 at 10:36 PM