



Sandra Maxine Ward Stephens

March 25, 1939 - March 3, 2025

Sandra Maxine Ward Stephens, 85, of Maggie Valley, NC, passed away on March 3, 2025. Sandra was born on March 25, 1939, in Montgomery, Alabama, to the late Dempsy C. and Susie Mae Ward.

She graduated from Jackson Memorial Hospital and pursued a lifelong career in nursing. She later moved to Maggie Valley, NC, where she retired after 50 years of dedicated service. Sandra was a loving mother, sister, and aunt.

However, her favorite title was “Nanee,” the name her grandchildren and great-grandchildren—ranging in age from 3 to 40—affectionately called her. She took great pride in their accomplishments and loved to share stories about them. She especially enjoyed baking, often enlisting her children and grandchildren to help smash nuts and mix ingredients in her “big blue bowl” and “big ugly pan.”

She loved it so much that she wrote a poem about it:

To my children and grandchildren

The Big Blue Bowl

If the big blue bowl could talk,
what a tale it would tell—

Of the recipes it has held, the ones that have succeeded and the ones that have failed.

If the big blue bowl could talk, it would speak of four small children, Laughing and licking its sides as they played hide and seek.

If the big blue bowl could talk, it would say, "How's Big Ugly today?"

Sandra was preceded in death by her parents, Dempsy and Susie Ward, and her beloved brother-in-love, James H. Vincent, whom she considered her own brother.

She is survived by her four children: Lisa Stephans, Lori Stephans, Michael (Kelly) Stephans, and Joseph (Margie) Stephans; her cherished sister and lifelong best friend, Brenda Vincent; and her nephew, Jimmy (Marian) Vincent. She also leaves behind nine treasured grandchildren: Zakery (Tammie) Noland, Jessica "Susie" (Josh) Westmoreland, Daniel (Kirsten) Hambleton, Christyn (Curtis) Lankster, Jordyn Atwood, Jace (Emily) Atwood, and Nick, Ben, and Jacob Stephans. Lastly, she is survived by her sweetest great-grandchildren: Jaxyn, Kyle, Damon, Ivan, Josslyn, Tatum, and Maggie.

Sandra's love and warmth will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew her.

A Celebration of life will be held privately with the family at a later date in Maggie Valley, NC.

Arrangements are entrusted to Ryan Funeral Home & Crematory, Trenton, GA.