



Ora Irby Blanks

August 11, 1936 - August 21, 2020

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." - Psalm 116:15

Ora Florence Irby Blanks went to be with the Lord, Friday, August 21, 2020, after a prolonged battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

She was born August 11, 1936 in Hurt, Virginia to William Nathaniel Irby and Mary Doss Irby. Ora was one of twelve children and the last of her generation. Her death is the end of an era for the Irby family, who will sorely miss her.

On October 5, 1963 she married A.V. Blanks. He was handpicked by God. Ora was bubbly and effervescent. People were drawn to her lively personality. She easily engaged in conversation and had a wide circle of friends. She was bright, inquisitive and wanted to travel during her summer breaks from teaching school. A.V. was quiet and content to stay at home. He desired her happiness and encouraged her to travel, while he tended the farm. Their differences complimented one another. A.V.'s generosity enabled her to travel all over the world, visiting Africa, Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Israel, Spain and many other countries. She maintained worldwide friendships through letter writing.

Ora was a wordsmith and loved to write long, descriptive letters. She was also known for short notes of appreciation or encouragement. Regardless of the

length, her correspondence was flawlessly worded and cherished by the recipient. She often typed on an old ribbon typewriter, but her beautiful penmanship was a joy to behold.

Ora had a lifelong love for learning. Growing up on the farm on Pocket Road, she'd take a book with her to weed the garden. She excelled in school and was valedictorian of her graduating class. She went on to earn degrees from Holmes College of the Bible in Greenville, South Carolina and Averett University, in Danville.

Her dearest book was the Bible. She called it "The Book of Books". Ora was saved at the age of twelve and lived a vibrant, consecrated life for the Lord. She was a natural educator, teaching English Literature at Altavista High School and was a matchless Sunday School teacher at Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church. She was always immaculately prepared to teach. She lived her life in the nailprint of Jesus' hand, wanting His will above all else and for Him to be glorified in whatever she did. Her prayer life was unparalleled. She was filled with the Holy Spirit and possessed "Mountain-moving Faith". She is reaping the rewards for her far-reaching influence and witness. She was faithful to serve her church, as long as her health permitted. In addition to teaching, she sang in the choir and supported missions, including building the A.V. Blanks Memorial Church in Africa, which she and Sheila traveled to Zimbabwe, to dedicate in 1996.

Her beloved A.V. predeceased her July 28, 1994. She and A.V. had no children, but took special interest in their niece, Sheila, and loved her as their own daughter.

She loved all of her nieces and nephews, many of whom called her "Honey", which she loved, but Sheila was special.

Ora is survived by her niece and caregiver, Sheila Hardy Moon and her husband, Charles Keith Moon, Sr. and their children, Jenny Lind Moon and Charles Keith Moon, Jr. She is also survived by Jenny's daughters, Breighanna Lind and Kailee Nicole.

She touched the lives of countless people, with her ability to connect with people and her gift of Love. She is further survived by a multitude of friends, nieces and nephews, in both the Irby and Blanks families. The family is grateful to the staff of Liberty Ridge Assisted Living, in Lynchburg and Seven Hills Hospice Care, as well as her former caregivers, Brenda Pickeral, Alice Mattox and Louise Towler.

She was predeceased by her sisters, Nola I. Searce, Effie I. Hardy, Esther I. Pearson and Bettie I. Leffel "Teen" and her brothers; Dallas, Carlton, Sterlin, Charlie and Maynard; and two infant brothers, Reeve and Marie.

In lieu of flowers, please consider the Alzheimer's Association, 355 Rio Road West, Suite 102, Central and Western Virginia Chapter, Charlottesville, VA 22901 or Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1212 Grit Road, Hurt, VA 24563. Ora would like her lasting memorial to be prayer for the Lost.

A memorial service will be conducted at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, October 3, 2020 at Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church.

The family will receive friends beginning at 12:30 p.m.

Finch and Finch Funeral and Cremation Service, Altavista is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Altavista Memorial Park

642 Wards Road
Altavista, VA 24517

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 3. 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church
1212 Grit Rd.
Hurt, VA 24563

Memorial Service

OCT 3. 2:00 PM (ET)

Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church
1212 Grit Rd.
Hurt, VA 24563

Tribute Wall



“ *Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service created a Tribute Video in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service - October 01, 2020 at 04:14 PM

MA

“ *Marian sent a virtual gift in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Marian - April 03, 2021 at 05:10 PM

MA

“ *Marian lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Marian - April 03, 2021 at 05:10 PM

BW

I will greatly miss Mrs. Blanks until I see her in Heaven. She touched my life (and so many other lives) in numerous ways. She was there for me in tenth grade when no one else was. She showed ALL of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23 which says the nine fruits are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) in every way, and was also very compassionate, heartwarming, giving, and made me laugh and smile every day! I love you "Mama Blanks!"

Lovingly from one of your many daughters,

Bobbie Arthur Wade

Bobbie Arthur Wade - May 21, 2021 at 10:14 AM



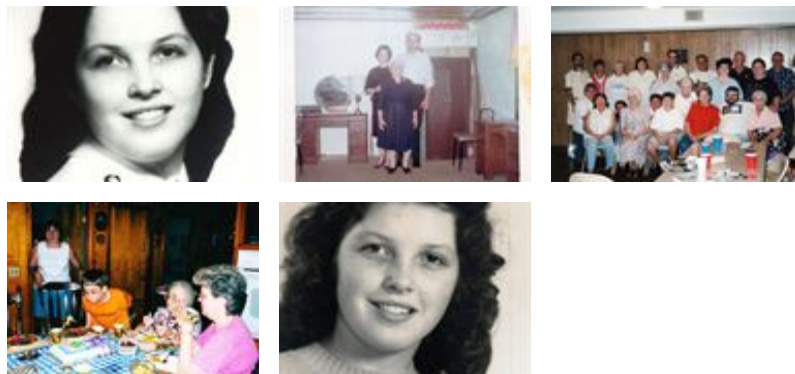
“ 3 files added to the album *Memorial Service*



Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service - October 05, 2020 at 11:00 AM



“ 75 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service - September 28, 2020 at 02:16 PM

TP

“ *To the Irby & Blanks Family!*
I know one day we all have to cross this road that we do not want to bare. To hear the passing of Mrs. Balnks saddens my heart. 😞
.Words cannot describe this lady. Class of 1988 you all will know what I'm talking about. She was a jewel, so precious, humble and always had a story to tell you. I periodically visited her . Mrs. Blanks will be greatly missed. She touched my life in such a way that I will never forget. RIP OIB ❤️🙏



T. Patrick - August 24, 2020 at 09:50 PM

BP

“ *Brenda Pickeral lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Brenda Pickeral - August 24, 2020 at 08:17 PM

KM

“ For anyone touched by Mrs. Blank's life, my thoughts and prayers go out to you. My relationship with Mrs. Blanks was only of student and teacher. I remembered her always having a big smile, loving shoes (at one point she boasted of having 100 pairs) and enjoying teaching.

I don't know if she practiced recycling in her personal life, but she introduced her students to recycling notebook paper. There was no excuse for not having paper. If you were unprepared, you knew to go to the windowsill where you would find stacks of paper that still had at least one side unused. Back in the day we were able to choose our English classes each grading period. Some of the most interesting classes I took under Mrs. Blanks were "Perspectives on Death and Dying" and "Perspectives on Life" - deep thinking subjects - courses that offered you to do self-reflection and introspection. I suppose I fell in love with the written word under her instruction - but was it more under her guidance?

Kay Moore - August 24, 2020 at 06:43 PM

MD

“ I am at a loss for words I didn't know the brothers but I knew all of the sisters. Miss Mary was my Grandma Lea's (Eurince) best friend for years. I remember taking her over and spending hours with Miss Mary and her daughters when they came while we were there. So sorry for your loss because Ora was a very special and gracious women.

*Love to you all,
Melissa & Bill Daniels
Irma Hedrick (Lea)*

Melissa & Bill Daniels - August 24, 2020 at 04:52 PM

RC

“ *Randolph And Joyce Coffey lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Randolph and Joyce Coffey - August 24, 2020 at 03:52 PM

DD

“ *I have such wonderful childhood memories of being so excited to see Aunt Ora and A.V. When we would visit Grandma Irby. Love and prayers to all of our family*

Deborah Dixon - August 24, 2020 at 01:52 PM

SD

“ *Sue Reynolds Doss lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Sue Reynolds Doss - August 24, 2020 at 08:04 AM

MS

“ *Martha Shelton lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Martha Shelton - August 24, 2020 at 01:20 AM

SK

“ *Such an exceptional teacher. You could always see the love she had in growing her students. Some of my fondness school memories were in Mrs. Blanks class.
Class of '79*

Susan Krantz - August 23, 2020 at 10:04 PM

PD

“ *Phyllis & Glenn Dalton lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Phyllis & Glenn Dalton - August 23, 2020 at 08:26 PM



“ *Mrs. Blanks was an amazing teacher and woman. I took all the classes that I could under her because she was such a joy to have for a teacher. She radiated God's love in all things she did. She was always smiling and had a kind word for everyone regardless of the situation. We need more people in this world like her. Prayers for her family during this time.*

Melissa Booker - August 23, 2020 at 08:04 PM

JB

“ *Ora was our very special friend while we pastored the Hurt Church. She kept in contact with us after we moved with her beautiful words as long as she was able. She was an excellent Sunday School teacher and loved to share God's Word. She showed her love to us in many ways. She is rejoicing now in heaven with her Lord.*

Joe & Sandy Beck - August 23, 2020 at 07:47 PM

SM

“ Mrs. Blanks was my favorite teacher! She was an awesome woman...she made her classes fun I always tried to be in her class! She had a great personality and was so funny! I learned so much from her! I was able to visit her many times at her home! I feel so blessed to have known her. Now she has gone to be with Jesus and reunited with AV...many prayers go out to the family! May God give you comfort and peace!

Sharon Matherly - August 23, 2020 at 07:04 PM

CS

“ Mrs Blanks was the most godly woman ever. In everything and in every way she showed the love of Christ. I feel so blessed to have known her. My love and prayers to the family.

Celeste Shirlen - August 23, 2020 at 06:44 PM

CH

“ This was my best teacher I ever had, I felt she was more than a teacher with her witty sense humor, beautiful smile, and wonderful laugh! My thoughts and prayers are with Shelia,Keith, and the rest of the family.



Chris Gilbert Hall - August 23, 2020 at 01:55 PM

JA

“ Jay lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks



Jay - August 23, 2020 at 11:58 AM

BW

“ Mrs. Blanks was truly a special person to many! She was my favorite teacher, mentor, and a wonderful Christian. I'm so grateful that God put her in my path when I needed a positive and loving influence. She made each one of her students feel special and loved, gave us a desire to learn, and have fun.

I still have a note that she wrote to my parents in 1986.

I will cherish our friendship forever, and look forward to seeing her again in Heaven one day.



Bobbie Wade - August 23, 2020 at 09:43 AM

GW

“ Sorry for your loss. Ora was a special lady.
Always smiling. Prayers



Gwenda Dudley Willard - August 23, 2020 at 09:21 AM

SD

“ Mrs. Blanks was an exceptional person as well as a great teacher.
Always a smile on her face. Sympathy to the family

Sue Reynolds Doss - August 23, 2020 at 08:41 AM

GD

“ *Glenn & Phyllis Daton lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Glenn & Phyllis Daton - August 23, 2020 at 08:18 AM

AP

“ *Anita Phillips lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks*



Anita Phillips - August 23, 2020 at 08:18 AM

RB

“ *Ora was the greatest Sunday School teacher that we ever had! Her object lessons were so creative and memorable! We always enjoyed our visits as well. She loved to talk about AV and about her trips around the world. And, never could you give her anything that she didn't give you something in return!*
Keith and Sheila, you were such a blessing to Ora, faithfully taking care of her. We will keep you in our prayers. We hope you can take comfort in knowing she is in the presence of the Lord .
Ora, I hope I used correct grammar because I know you would correct me if you were reading this. One of those amusing traits you had... Always a teacher at heart loved by everyone who had you!!!

Ryland and Mitzi Brumfield - August 23, 2020 at 07:24 AM



“ Janet Thurman lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks



Janet Thurman - August 23, 2020 at 06:16 AM



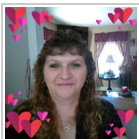
“ On behalf of the congregation of Hurt Pentecostal Holiness Church we extend our thoughts and prayers to the family of our dear sister in the Lord, Mrs. Ora Blanks. Her life and legacy shall forever be cherished by all who knew her. We are grateful for her devotion to the Lord and His Church. - Pastor Rich Denning

Pastor Rich Denning - August 23, 2020 at 01:06 AM



“ Ora was truly a great Godly lady and loved by all who knew her. Blessing to all the family. Linda Rice

Linda Rice - August 22, 2020 at 11:58 PM



“ Amazing woman, I enjoyed our time id read her bible to her and comment on her notes written in the margines. She was truly a woman of god... fly high ms ora you gained your wings.

Alice Mattox - August 22, 2020 at 11:57 PM

SD

“ Ora was an amazing teacher, lady, and most of all friend. I will forever cherish the memories shared spending time with her and talking on the phone. She was always a cheerleader for her former students and wanted the best in life for them. I know she is happy to be reunited with A.V.. Ora, Godspeed until we meet again.



Scott Davis - August 22, 2020 at 11:51 PM

ME

“ Mary Edmonds lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks



Mary Edmonds - August 22, 2020 at 09:14 PM

RB

“ Ora Blanks was the greatest Sunday School teacher that Ryland and I had the privilege of having. We loved visiting with her and hearing about her traveling experiences and loved her sense of humor. You could never do anything for her though without her doing something for you in return. Keith and Sheila, she was so blessed to have you. You were so faithful taking care of her!!! We will keep you in our prayers but hope you can have comfort in knowing she is in the presence of the Lord! Love and prayers, Ryland and Mitzi Brumfield

Ryland and Mitzi Brumfield - August 22, 2020 at 08:31 PM

GW

“ Sorry for your loss prayers. She was a very special person.



Gwenda Dudley Willard - August 22, 2020 at 08:28 PM

DM

“ Dorothy R Mitchell sent a virtual gift in memory of Ora Irby Blanks



dorothy R mitchell - August 22, 2020 at 08:03 PM

DM

she was a special person. know she will be missed. may she rest in peace

dorothy R mitchell - August 22, 2020 at 08:05 PM



“ I will always remember her and her colorful dresses combined with perfectly matching footwear. I don't believe she wore the same pair of pretty shoes twice during any school year. But the most memorable thing about her was the genuineness of her desire to pass along a love of literature so all her students could experience things through other people's eyes, visit other places, or even travel through time, just in case we never left this little area around Altavista. So long, Mrs. Blanks! You won't be forgotten.

Deb Reed - August 22, 2020 at 08:02 PM

MD

“ Ora was definitely one of a kind. Her sense of humor, her love for Jesus and her family, and her unmatched abilities as a teacher are just a small sample of her many God-given talents. Although our families are scattered now we still have a common bond that few families have. God bless Sheila, Keith and their family who have ministered to her over many years -you will be rewarded for your faithfulness to Ora and to your God. I love each of you dearly.

Mack Doss - August 22, 2020 at 07:50 PM

BP

“ Such a Blessing to sit and care for Ora. She help me also.
I loved her dearly. RIP sweet Lady. Such a godly Lady who love her Lord. She loved Shelia & Keith and their children as her own. They did an amazing job of taking care of Or a. Prayers and God Bless. The Family.



Brenda Pickeral - August 22, 2020 at 07:48 PM

KD

“ I was one of many students at AHS. She was a great influence on my life and I remember her telling about her travels. I know she will be missed.

Kevin Dowdy - August 22, 2020 at 07:44 PM

BA

“ Ora was a dear friend of mine and we had the same date for our birthday. I remember going to see her last year on our birthday. We had many good times together and we also dated together and spent the night with each other. She was a great christian and set and example for others. I know she is enjoying Heaven.

Betty S Adkins

Bill & Betty Adkins - August 22, 2020 at 07:33 PM

JS

“ I still have the little book she gave me when I was her teacher's aide my senior year in high school many years ago. Rest well, Mrs. Blanks. You had a genuine, natural grace about you.



Julie (Atkinson) Sowers - August 22, 2020 at 07:27 PM

BA

“ Bill & Betty Adkins lit a candle in memory of Ora Irby Blanks



Bill & Betty Adkins - August 22, 2020 at 07:23 PM



“ Ora changed my life, and didn't even know it. She was a teacher that cared enough about her students to help them in anyway that she could. I still have the three page letter that she wrote me when I was in her class, full of love and advice. I will never forget her and the love she gave me. Rest In Peace, beautiful lady.

Cheryl James - August 22, 2020 at 07:02 PM

PP

“ I worked with Ora at BGF in the finishing office, she taught me my job there. When she and A.V. Got married, I helped with her dressing and the wedding. When she left BGF and got her degree to teach, she taught my son, Eddie. Ora was a great friend. Will surely be missed by all.



Pat Puckette - August 22, 2020 at 06:12 PM

JD

“ I have many fond memories of being a student of Mrs. Blanks. It was more than a blessing to have been taught by her, for she was far more than a teacher. Thoughts and prayers to her family.



Joey Dalton - August 22, 2020 at 05:50 PM

AC

RIP Aunt Ora !!! Will never forget you and Uncle AV!!!

Anthony Clark - August 23, 2020 at 05:59 AM