



Alice Russell Oates

January 26, 1944 - January 28, 2026

Alice Jean Oates took her last breath on earth and her first breath in Heaven on January 28, 2026, surrounded by family at her home in Sumiton. She was truly the apple of God's eye, and anyone who knew her could see it—in her beauty, her grace, and most of all in the way she loved.

Alice Jean was born and raised in Arkadelphia, Cullman, Alabama, to Eva Louis Washington Russell and Chester Ottis Russell. It was there that she met the love of her life and soulmate, Aaron Charles "Fuzz" Oates, Jr., through Daddy's sister, Della. From the very beginning, their life together was full of laughter, family, and fun—especially when it came to playing cards. Rook was their favorite. Daddy turned Mom into a fearless Rook player who would confidently bid 180 with nothing in her hand, trusting her partner and the "kitty" to pull it off. Bless her partners over the years—she came close to giving several of them a heart attack. Had Daddy lived, they would have celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on November 19, 2025.

Our mother was the picture of a Southern lady—elegant, classy, and beautiful—but her true beauty came from within. She often said beauty was only skin deep, and she lived that belief through her kindness, generosity, and unconditional love for others. She gave freely of

herself and expected nothing in return.

She was strong in ways we didn't fully realize until later in life.

When Daddy went through five heart bypass surgeries in 2017, followed by dementia and Alzheimer's, Mom showed a quiet strength that carried them through. That same strength was evident again in 2025 as she fought bravely for her own life until the very end. She was a fighter—steady, faithful, and courageous.

While raising her children, Cindy and Chuck, she worked several jobs, though raising us was the hardest non-paying job of all. Her first job, and the one she disliked most, was at the Arrow Shirt Factory in Jasper. Later, she worked at Sears & Roebuck Company in downtown Birmingham—first as a cashier in the cigar shop and then as a dispatcher in the appliance warehouse. Almost every Saturday, she took Cindy and Chuck shopping at Sears, with Chuck always dressed to perfection in matching Garanimal outfits. The Sears service technicians loved her so much that one even gave her a dozen red roses once—Daddy wasn't too thrilled about that surprise and showed just a hint of jealousy.

She also worked at Sumiton Water Works as a clerk alongside Cleo Attaway, a job that strengthened her leadership skills and confidence. She loved her time working at Dora Medical Clinic for Dr. Ellis and Dr. Whitley, along with Clio, and later served as office manager for Dr. Roy Sims, OB-GYN, where she cherished the time spent working with her sister Janie. She eventually worked for Baptist Health Systems in several roles and locations, retiring from BHS. She gained so much medical knowledge along the way that she nearly convinced her family she had her own medical degree.

The greatest gift Mom gave—to her family and to everyone she met—was her love. She devoted countless hours caring for her mother, Granny Russell, spending nearly every day overseeing her care at The Chase Assisted Living Center in Jasper. Her dedication earned her the nickname “Sarge” from Uncle Kenneth and other siblings, a title she wore proudly since she always liked being in charge and having things done her way.

She poured that same love into others, including her nephew Tony Baker during his ongoing battle with cancer. She was always there for him—offering encouragement, prayers, and visits, usually arriving with her famous peanut butter cake made especially for him. She also treasured her monthly lunches and shopping dates with her niece Ashley Sims and longtime family friend Elsie, a tradition that lasted for years until her health no longer allowed her to make the trip.

Mom had many passions. She was a devoted and faithful member of Sumiton Church of God, where she especially loved singing in the choir and participating in senior adult activities and trips with friends. She loved cooking for family and friends, perfecting beloved recipes like Oates mac and cheese, peanut butter cake, and Granny Russell’s famous chocolate cake. She firmly believed, a belief she shared with Brad, that all food had to be cooked with love—and she proved it every time she cooked.

She adored shoes, jewelry, and skincare—owning enough of each to open her own store. No one ever believed she was nearly 82 years old, and she swore by Pond’s Cold Cream. She also loved her flowers and yard, taking great pride in her gardening. Uncle Willie once joked she should charge admission because it felt like visiting the Botanical or

Bellingrath Gardens.

Mom loved babies and children and had special nicknames for her favorites, names only she could make sound so sweet; such as "Sang-Of-A-Dolly" and "Dida-Boo-Suey". Though thwarted by Cindy and Aunt Pat, she once considered adopting during her empty-nester years, she instead poured her heart into her grandchildren. These last few months, she eagerly awaited the arrival of her great-grandson, Roman Brooks Oates.

She loved her family and friends deeply and never met a stranger. If she liked you, you became family. Her beloved fur babies, Sheba and Bella-Boo, were treated like daughters and held a special place in her heart.

Alice Jean is survived by her children, Cindy and Aaron Charles "Chuck" III (Crystal) Oates; her sister, Patricia Baker; brothers Willie (Anita) Russell and Kenneth (Eunice) Russell; grandchildren Chad (Tabby) Carlsen and Chandler (Casey) Oates; sister-in-law Della (Fletcher) Jordan; great-grandchildren Marlee and Gemma Carlsen, Kacey (Eric) Shack, baby Mariah Jade Shack, and soon-to-be-born Roman Brooks Oates; and a host of nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Aaron Charles "Fuzz" Oates Jr.; her parents Eva and Chester Russell; her siblings Emmitt and Lawrence Russell and Janie Russell Sims; her parent in laws Reble and Aaron, Sr. Oates, brother in law Billy (Eva) Oates, nephew David Oates, niece Sonya Cox and her cherished dogs Sheba and Bella-Boo; and many beloved family members who welcomed her home.

Our father was the cornerstone of our family, but our mother was the mortar that held us all together. She was full of life, laughter, faith, and love, with a sweet and gentle spirit. God truly blessed us with the apple of His eye. She was the best mother, sister, grandmother, aunt, and friend we could have ever asked for, and her love will live on in our hearts until we are reunited again in Heaven. In lieu of flowers, the family request donations be made to Sumiton Church of God Senior Ministries.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **14.** 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

New Horizon Memorial Funeral Home
5203 Hollis Goodwin Road
Dora, AL 35062
(205) 648-2323

Celebration of Life

FEB **14.** 3:00 PM (CT)

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5203 Hollis Goodwin Road
Dora, AL 35062
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Tribute Wall



“ 235 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



New Horizon Memorial Funeral Home - February 14 at 09:50 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Alice Russell Oates.*



February 14 at 03:49 AM



“ *Friends at Hohmann & Barnard purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Alice Russell Oates.*



Friends at Hohmann & Barnard - February 12 at 09:21 AM

DG

“ Alice was truly a beautiful person inside and out. Always with a beautiful smile and a kind word. Chuck, Cindy, you were blessed with remarkable parents.

Don Gravlee

Don Gravlee - February 07 at 11:22 AM

NA

“ She was a good friend to my sister Bobbi. They are having a great time by now, talking and walking over Heaven.

Naomi - February 06 at 10:28 AM

WS

“ Alice was great lady I grew up living beside them. I'm sorry Willie Russell and Kenneth Russell for your lose. Mike Smith 407-488-8956

WILLIAM SMITH - January 31 at 11:01 AM