



# Bessie Donnell

DEC 14, 1926 - MAR 17, 2026



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
-----------------------	--------



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## **B**essie Jeanette Donnell

December 14, 1926 – Beloved Wife, Mother & Faithful Servant

### EARLY LIFE

Jeanette was born to Ruby and John Fleming on December 14, 1926, in Los Angeles, California, the eldest of five children: John, Wilbur, Howard, and Margaret. In her early years, the family relocated to San Francisco, where she completed her education through the San Francisco Unified School District.

### MARRIAGE & FAMILY

In June of 1946, Jeanette met and married the love of her life, Sherman Donnell. That same year, the couple relocated to Oakland, where Sherman purchased their first home. Their devoted union spanned 62 beautiful years and was blessed with six children: Sherman Jr., Annette, Narvella, Carl, Linda, and Carolyn.

### FAITH & COMMUNITY

Also in 1946, Jeanette and Sherman united with New Hope Baptist Church, where she remained a faithful and active member for over 80 years. She sang joyfully in the choir and gave freely of her time teaching during Vacation Bible School.

Jeanette was deeply invested in her children's school and extracurricular activities, serving as an active member of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and as Den Mother for Cub Scout Pack 18, where her husband served as Scout Master. It was through this role that she discovered a



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remarkable talent for crafts, teaching the scouts to create leather wallets, keychains, belts, and more.

### HOBBIES & PASSIONS

Jeanette had a gift for bringing beauty into the world. She delighted in baking specialty cakes, crafting elegant floral arrangements, and exploring the world through travel—particularly cruising. Her favorite destinations included the Caribbean Islands, Hawaii, and the Fiji Islands.

She was equally known for her impeccable sense of style. With a passion for elegant suits and beautiful hats, Jeanette turned heads wherever she went and was frequently invited to participate in fashion shows at New Hope Baptist Church.

### LEGACY

Janette leaves to cherish in her memory her daughters: Annette Bearden, Narvella Berthia, Linda Abney, and Carolyn Donnell. Her legacy lives on through her eight grandchildren: Matthew Bearden III, Jeffrey Bearden, Kimberly Paris, Tracey French,

Kevin Berthia, Monica Abney, Leon Donnell, and Erica Donnell (preceded in death). She is also survived by five great-grandchildren and a host of beloved nieces and nephews.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Psalm 23:6



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Bessie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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