



Virginia Ellen Smotherman

NOV 20, 1928 - MAR 10, 2026



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Virginia Ellen Smotherman, daughter of the late Flora and Grady Smotherman, was the youngest of five girls. She was born in Mansfield, Ohio on November 20, 1928, and went to be with her Lord and Savior, March 10, 2026, at the age of 97. She never married and was a very independent woman (long before it became fashionable) with a heart to serve others.

She graduated from Nyack College in NY in 1951, and completed language courses at Wayne State, and L'Alliance and La Sorbonne in Paris.

After serving for 5 years at a Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Detroit, she went to Gabon, Africa as a missionary - giving herself wholeheartedly to seeing people put their faith and trust in Christ Jesus. In Africa, her initial responsibilities were administrative management – from accounting, to budgeting and financial controls, to regulatory reporting. She then transitioned to field missions at a time when this was the exception for a single woman (due to safety concerns). With her pet monkey close by, she translated the Bible, trained lay pastors, and guided three other missionaries. At one point she suffered severe burns and was miraculously healed to the astonishment of those in her village.

After returning to the U.S. she managed the bookstore at Simpson Bible College in San Francisco and completed formal accounting coursework at Golden Gate University. She eventually transitioned into accounting in the private sector, along with a part-time position as a tax expert with H&R Block (Level 3 and International).

Virginia (aka “Auntie VA”) always had a special place in her heart for international students: from organizing dinners for her nephew and college friends at her favorite downtown Chinese restaurants, to serving the international students at her local church. For many of the students at the church she was known as “Grandma”. She organized Bible studies, game nights, hiking excursions along the coastal trails, and served many meals (including her incomparable homemade pies - specialties handed down from her Grandma Smith).



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In 2019, at age 90, Virginia's family thought it best to relocate her back to Ohio where she could be closer to family for care as her health declined. She left quite reluctantly, with many fond memories of her 50 years in San Francisco.

Virginia's many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and great, great nieces and nephews will all miss her. Two of VA's sisters (the twins) went home to heaven at age 95. Virginia thought she was entitled to do the same - she remained an independent spirit and over her last two years frequently expressed her desire to "go home" and meet Jesus.

Immediate family members will gather privately at a later date to share memories and celebrate the life of their dear Aunt Virginia. While NOT expected, anyone insistent on a memoriam could donate to Legacies of Success (<https://www.legaciesofsuccess.org/>).



Memories only last if you share them

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



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