

Linda Kay Wilson Gwaltney

September 8, 1943 — December 13, 2024

Linda Kay Wilson Gwaltney, 81, of Smithfield, VA, one of the classiest women you could hope to meet, but always a true country girl at heart, passed away on December 13, 2024. She joins her late husband, Cecil W. Gwaltney, Jr., and leaves many, many wonderful memories and life lessons with her two children, Cecil W. (Trey) Gwaltney, III and Jill W. Gwaltney, both of Smithfield, VA.

Linda was born in Burlington, NC on September 8, 1943 to Violet D. and Stephen L. Wilson, both deceased. She was number five in the Wilson brood, and quite noticeable with all her red hair and freckles. Linda was predeceased by siblings Benny J. Wilson, Gary L. Wilson, William A. Wilson, Leo S. Wilson, and survived by siblings Bobbie W. Miles (Johnny), Brenda W. Moser (Jimmy), Michael D. Wilson, Charlie N. Wilson (Michele), Stephen R. Wilson (Linda), Stephanie W. Boggs (Jimmy), all of Burlington, and Vanessa W. Mullinex (Barry), of Albermarle, NC. (If you're keeping track, you should be up to twelve kids in that family. "Cheaper by the dozen" was the Wilson motto.) She is also survived by a sister-in-law, Cathy Wilson of Burlington, a brother-in-law, Maynard Gwaltney, Sr. of Smithfield, and was predeceased by a niece, Jamie M. Hinson, and a nephew, Gary L. Wilson, II. Linda was often called "Aint Kay" by 27 nieces and nephews and 21 great-nieces and -nephews.

Linda graduated from Walter Williams High School in Burlington, after which, on a blind date to the movies she met a young man from Smithfield, VA who was attending Elon College. Linda and Cecil married in 1965, and moved to Portsmouth, VA, where they both worked in the banking business. After a few years they moved to Smithfield, and Linda began to make her impact on the small town she would forever call home. She was active in the Smithfield Women's Club, the Smithfield Little Theater, the Hamtown Harmony Chorus, and various projects around Smithfield. But every third Tuesday for nearly fifty years she could be found with some of her closest girlfriends playing bridge, sharing lunch, and telling stories... but never gossiping.

After her kids learned to make a sandwich and boil a hotdog, Linda decided she wanted a career in real estate. While showing homes and closing deals, she found a natural talent for interior design and décor. A dilapidated dairy barn (then later an old gas station on Main Street) became an upscale outlet for furniture, wallpaper, and custom window treatments, and Ashton Galleries was born. And what to do with the empty barn on the property? Start a storage business, of course. Smithfield Self Storage was one of her proudest achievements. Linda returned to real estate for a second run, until retiring at nearly 70. This gave her time to go into business with Trey flipping houses and to volunteer with Jill at many local festivals and events. She never saw a house she couldn't improve, nor a social event she couldn't make a bit more fun. She was a dynamic personality, and a loving force with which to be reckoned.

Trey and Jill would like to thank Drs. Tom and Shannon Pope, the staff at Magnolia Manor, Margaret Carroll, and Eunice Denson for their care and assistance, and all the many friends and family members we have been so fortunate to have.

A funeral service will be held at 2:00pm on Saturday, December 28, 2024, at Little's Funeral Home followed by a short service and interment at Ivy Hill Cemetery. A reception will follow at Smithfield Station.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Smithfield Little Theater, PO Box 332, Smithfield, VA 23431, or online at smithfieldlittletheatre.org, or a good cause of your choosing.