



## Frances Lee McCommons

November 10, 1919 - June 4, 2021

Frances Barber McCommons died peacefully in her sleep on June 4, 2021 in Fort Collins, Colorado at the age of 101. Frances was born during the Spanish Flu Pandemic and died during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Frances lived a life focused on God, Family, and Children. What an amazing life she lived and her family members are heartbroken that this bright light is gone from the world. If you met Frances, you would never forget her or the love she shared with everyone. You could never leave her home without being offered something to eat and drink and possibly a sweater if it was the least bit cold. The old song - This Little Light of Mine - I'm gonna let it shine - seemed to be written about Frances - she glowed with God's love.

Frances loved her family - there was never a doubt she loved you and loved you deeply. Each child and grandchild was sure that they were her favorite. The last six months of her life were spent cozy under 12 blankets, happy in her warm nest of a bed, asking about the welfare of her children, grandchildren, and extended family. She prayed for them all and talked about each one and how wonderful they were.

Frances is survived by her children John (Fran) McCommons of Redding, California; Judith Raines of Sherwood, Arkansas; and Debbie (Dana) Nance of Fort Collins, Colorado. She is also survived by 8 grandchildren: Lisa, Kelly (Bill), Glen (Christell), Alison (Brian), Jordan (Kim), Hope (Jared), Katie and Emily; and 8 great-grandchildren: Nathan, Ana, Joey, Wil, Elijah, Jared, and Kai; as well as many others that she loved and was honored to be called

Grandma by them. Frances was preceded in death by her husband John "J.R. or Mac" McCommons, daughter Sandra Paul, son Michael McCommons, son-in-laws Charles Raines and Lou Paul, grandson-in-law David Hexem, and great-grandson Max Stacy.

Frances also loved the thousands of children that she taught in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School throughout her lifetime. She loved them not only for the years she taught them but continued to love them and pray for them into adulthood. Frances was known for sending notes and cards out for every occasion to her family and church family. She celebrated every accomplishment of those she loved.

Frances believed in the healing power of God's love in every life and tried to live her own life so that Jesus would never be embarrassed she called herself a Christian. Frances modeled Christian Life by visiting the sick, feeding the poor, clothing those that needed clothes, visiting those in prison, and loving the unlovable. She believed strongly in the importance of telling children that Jesus loved them through her actions and words so no matter what happened in their lives, they knew that Jesus was there for them.

Frances was born on November 10, 1919 at home in McCrory, Arkansas to John Franklin Barber and Sallie Ann Totty Barber. Growing up on the family farm, she was the eldest of 7 brothers and sisters and took the role of big sister seriously. Through the years she fiercely loved her siblings but also their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Frances graduated McCrory High School in 1935 at 16 years old as class Salutatorian. She planned on starting Nursing School in the fall after turning 18 but that did not happen. Her High School sweetheart J.R. swept her off her feet in July 1937, when a date turned into an elopement and they were married by the local Justice of the Peace. There was no honeymoon, and both went back to their separate homes after the ceremony. A week later, Frances was taken by mule and wagon to J.R.'s family's farm to live with J.R. and his mother and father.

In the 1940's and now living on their own farm, Frances and J.R. welcomed

Sandy, John, Mike, and Judy to the family. In the mid-40's Frances and J.R. were honored with the Farm Family of the Year Award for Woodruff County for the best managed farm in the county. Farming was important for Frances and J.R. - not only for feeding their family but also for following the seasons and depending on God's Providence for their crops and livelihood. Throughout their lives, the weather would continue to be an important conversation for Frances and J.R. each morning. Once a farmer - always a farmer.

As the economics of the small family farm became no longer viable, Frances and J.R. moved their family to Barnwell, South Carolina, Knoxville, Tennessee, and Albuquerque, New Mexico where J.R. worked as a Pipefitter. In 1955, the family settled in Anaheim, California where the family bought a home on a street that was in the middle of orange groves. Frances was the Infant and Children's department manager at The Broadway in the then new Anaheim Center, and J.R. worked in the home building industry.

Frances and J.R. were a team in service to God. As laypeople, they helped in the growth at First Southern Baptist Church in Anaheim, then helped build from the ground up Crescent Southern Baptist Church in West Anaheim, and Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Orange. Crescent was built around an old house on the church property with members gathering every Saturday to work on the construction of the Fellowship Hall and later the Sanctuary. J.R. directed construction work and Frances ensured the workers were fed. As part of church outreach, J.R. would invite visiting church guests home for lunch every Sunday after church. Frances never knew how many people would be at her table for Sunday lunch each week. It never bothered her. She knew things would work out. They always did.

In 1958, Frances discovered that suspected gallbladder trouble was actually a surprise pregnancy with Debbie. Sandy was already married, John and Mike were in High School and Judy had been the youngest for 12 years. The ladies at Crescent lovingly nicknamed Frances "Sarah" after Abraham's wife whom the Bible tells us gave birth at 90. Frances gave up her job at The Broadway

and continued her work in children's ministry, Women's Missionary Union Leader, as well as mother to the three children still at home.

The early 1960's saw Frances and J.R.'s first grandchild Lisa born, followed by Kelly, and later Glen. In 1966, Mike was killed in Viet Nam while serving in the Army and the family was devastated with grief and loss. There are no words to describe the pain and suffering of losing Mike. Frances missed him every day of her life.

Crescent Church became the place where the memories of Mike's funeral became overwhelming and Frances and J.R. began their work at Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Orange - first as a mission in a house near the banks of the Santa Ana River and later in a new building on the corner of Lincoln and Canal. Frances and J.R. worked through their grief in service at Lincoln Avenue. Frances focused on teaching in Children's Ministry, as well as working in the Church kitchen as part of the Hospitality Committee. Frances cooked 5 turkeys every Thanksgiving for years to ensure the church Thanksgiving Dinner had enough turkey. Frances also volunteered as a Gold Star Mother in service to veterans and other mothers whose sons and daughters had been killed in military service. It is a sisterhood with strong bonds and shared determination to ensure that veterans are taken care of and no other Gold Star Mother is ever alone in her pain of loss.

John married Fran and welcomed Alison and Jordan. Judy married Charles and welcomed Hope. Much later, Debbie married Dana and welcomed Katie and Emily. Lisa married David. Kelly married Bill. Glen married Christell. Frances welcomed great-grandchildren Nathan, Ana, Joey, Wil, Elijah, Max, Jared, and Kai.

In July 1996, J.R. died of cancer and Frances was alone for the first time in her life. A few years later, Frances moved to Anaheim Hills in a condominium next to Debbie and Dana. Her work at Lincoln Avenue and with Gold Star Mothers never stopped and continued until moving to Colorado with Debbie and Dana in 2007.

Frances was always the smartest person in the room but in her humble way

would gently guide you to the right answer without your ever knowing she was guiding you. Frances was a gentle soul, but would instantly turn into a mother-bear if anyone threatened her children or family members.

The week before she died, Frances was visited by J.R. in a vision. Frances said J.R. was the "cutest thing" she had ever seen and appeared to be about the age he was when they were married. He walked into her room, grinned at her, nudged her with his elbow, grinned again and left. Frances glowed talking about this experience and that it gave her peace that she would know J.R. as her husband in heaven. They were lifelong friends that could talk for hours about non-family things and sweethearts until the end. They had their rough times but always seemed to be able to make each other laugh and heal. They truly liked each other. The idea of Frances seeing Jesus at last and seeing her J.R. again with their children and grandchildren already in heaven - provides comfort to her family that misses her so much.

To honor Frances - Hug someone you love. Smile at a stranger. Offer a cold drink to a visitor. Be extra kind to a child. Frances would approve.

Graveside Services were held Friday morning, June 18 at Anaheim Cemetery, Anaheim.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

JUN 18.

Anaheim Cemetery

## Gathering

JUL 10 (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel  
121 W. Olive St.  
Fort Collins, CO 80524