ETTA SIMMONS

Etta Beatrice Beavers Simmons, 65, died at Provena St. Joseph's Hospital in Joliet, Illinois on Monday, July 19, 2010.
A Memorial Service will be held at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, July 24, 2010, at Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church, 1030 Main Street, Louise, MS, 39097.
While a longtime resident of Louise, at the time of her death Etta resided in Joliet, Illinois with her sister, Edwina Covington, with whom she had lived since 2003.
Born July 13, 1945 in Jones County, Etta was the sixth child and fourth daughter to Ira and Verlena (Keys) Beavers, Sr. Etta married Q.C. Lamar Simmons in 1967, and to that union was born three children.
As a child, Etta, known then fondly as "Snookie", was shy and quiet, but even then she made friends easily, an ability that she carried throughout her life. Even as a child she had a sweet, positive and loving manner, qualities that never left her.
Etta began her formal education by attending Jones County Elementary School. She received her high school diploma from Piney Woods Country Life School, a historically black boarding school in Piney Woods. She went on to earn a B.S. in Elementary Education from Jackson State University in 1968. In 1982 she earned her M.A. in Education from Mississippi Valley State University.
A lifelong teacher, Etta began her career as an educator in 1967 in Clarksdale. in 1969 she began teaching elementary school in the Humphreys County School District, where she would remain a highly respected and most beloved teacher for 34 years. She was a committed and patient educator until her retirement in 2001.
One of her most notable achievements was receiving the Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence Award (GIVE. In 1996, Etta was presented with this honor by former first lady Pat Fordice, for her work with Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church and its activity center.
Dismayed by the lack of a town library, Etta, along with her husband and other volunteer assistants in the community, founded COPE, a tutorial and enrichment program, which focused on improving area students' reading, math, English, and computer skills. As a part of that initiative, the program received a $25,000 grant from the Quitman County Development Organization, along with several other smaller donations, which allowed Etta to set up a library in the Pleasant Hill church annex. This became the first and only library in the town, and achievement for which she was most proud.
She was preceded in death by both of her parents, an infant son, and two brothers, Joe Louis Beavers and Luther Beavers.
Survivors include her husband, Q.C. Simmons of Louise; a daughter, Lamaretta (Trev) Simmons-Kelderman, of Chicago, IL; a son, Tommy (Barby) Simmons, of Atlanta, GA; and one grandchild, Sylas Kelderman, of Chicago, IL; siblings: Edwina Covington, of Joliet, IL; Wilhelmina (Joe) Ramirez, of Laurel, MS; Ira Beavers, Jr., of Phoenix, AZ; Herticena Crosby of Milwaukee, WI; and Carvin Beavers, of Kankakee, IL; goddaughter, Debra Thomas of Belzoni; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.