



## Ila Jean Payne

October 31, 1956 - June 22, 2026

Ila Jean Payne born October 31, 1956, passed away on June 22, 2026. To tell her story honestly is to acknowledge that she was a complex woman. She became a mother of three before she was 18 years old and spent much of her life doing the best she could with what she had and what she knew. Life was not always easy, but she worked hard, persevered through challenges, and never stopped caring for those she loved.

If there was one thing she trusted completely, it was animals. She often joked that animals never failed her, and she loved them with her whole heart.

Throughout her life she welcomed countless pets into her home, spoiling them shamelessly. Any stray, injured, abandoned, or forgotten animal that crossed her path had a good chance of finding food, shelter, comfort, and love because she simply could not turn away.

She was a creator in every sense of the word. She loved sewing and spent countless hours making Christmas gifts for her children and unforgettable Halloween costumes for her grandchildren. One family favorite was a Jester she lovingly created for her niece, Lena, many years ago. She also enjoyed crocheting, leaving behind beautiful afghans and handmade Christmas ornaments that will continue to warm homes and hearts for years to come. A self-taught woodworker, she found joy in building and crafting gifts for the people she cared about.

She was also a giver. Not because she had an abundance, but because she understood struggle. If she saw someone in need, she helped when she

could. Whether it was turning the car around to help an elderly stranger finish mowing her lawn in the summer heat, giving money to a homeless couple outside a gas station, or gathering blankets for stranded people during a snowstorm, acts of kindness came naturally to her.

She was funny, with a laugh that could fill a room. She was a wonderfully messy cook whose kitchen often looked chaotic, but whose food always brought people back for seconds. She was stubborn, set in her ways, and rarely interested in changing her mind once it was made up.

Most of all, she was herself—strong, imperfect, generous, creative, compassionate, and unforgettable. Those who knew and loved her will remember her not for being flawless, but for being real.

As requested by our wonderful Momma and loving wife, there will be no service. We will have a celebration of her beautiful life at a later time.

She was proceeded in death by:

Her Grandparents:

Bruce & Nola Miller

Tony & Nora Worley

Her parents Lonnie & Cynthia Miller

Brother Don Miller

Grandson Roger William Ramsey

Brother-in-Law George Griffitts

Sister and Brother-in-Law Barbara and Jerry Parks

Mother-In Law Grace Payne

She is survived by her loving Husband of 35 years Roger Payne.

Daughter Tammy Thomas of Ocean City, MD

Son in Law Herbert Thomas

Daughter and Son-in-Law Samantha and James Boggs of Greeneville, Tn

Son David Gunter of Nashville, Tn

Grandchildren:

Ashley Thomas of Newport, Tn

Taylor and KiKi Thomas of Wake Forest, NC

Megan Ramsey and Fiancé Lauren Lee of Harlan, Ky

Reed Boggs (Makayla Bowman) of Greeneville, Tn

Emmie Gunter Sevierville, Tn

Liam Boggs Greeneville, Tn

And a very dear Sister and Best Friend Darlena Griffitts of Maryville, Tn

The family asks that in her memory, you honor her by showing kindness in whatever way you can- by volunteering at a local animal shelter or rescue, helping or simply offering a meal, blanket, or a helping hand to someone who needs it.

Family and friends may sign the guest register online at: [www.manesfuneralhome.com](http://www.manesfuneralhome.com)

Arrangements with Manes Funeral Home, Newport, TN