



## Joyce Virginia Jefferson

December 8, 1934 - November 10, 2019

Joyce Virginia Jefferson was an actor in 65 plays, directed 12, and spawned or supported theater groups in Texas and beyond. In San Antonio, she appeared at the Chaparral Acting Company at Lackland AFB, Fort Sam Houston Playhouse, the Harlequin Dinner Theatre, the San Pedro Playhouse, and Southwest Research Institute among others. She was Agnes in *A DELICATE BALANCE*; Rose in *GOD'S FAVORITE*; Viney in *A MIRACLE WORKER*; Grace in *NEVER TOO LATE*; Carrie in *THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL*. Each of those titles, whether by fate or divine design, captured an essential aspect of a remarkable woman. As Shakespeare said, *ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE*.

ACT 1: Milwaukee, 1934, the Great Depression. Joyce Virginia Olivier lived in a small home with few beds housing eight children. The Catholic Church and the public dole stepped in when food and electricity were scarce. To make ends meet, Joyce helped her mother clean Milwaukee's Aberdeen Hotel. In Milwaukee's vibrant culture, Joyce met Louis Armstrong, dated Al Jarreau's brother, taught herself the piano, and honed her theatrical talents. All the while her family, poor but happy and resilient, leaned on each other. ACT 2: Summer in Milwaukee. At a public pool where African Americans were permitted to swim, Joyce met Bill Jefferson, a high school athlete with a kind heart and a warm smile. Bill and Joyce married in 1954, leaving their Milwaukee home and touring the country with the United States Air Force.

ACT 3: The 1950s through the turbulent 60s. Bill and Joyce added to the Jefferson cast of players from 1955 through 1964 – Roxanne, Darrell, Lamont, Celeste, Wallace, and Leah. Joyce’s children became her muses. She learned her lines with them; they learned the beauty of English and the power of passion through her. Among Bill and Joyce’s children were an engineer, a Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, lawyers, a firefighter, a banker, a devoted mother – all acolytes of their loving parents. ACT 4: San Antonio (1967), the final starting point for Joyce’s remaining years. She and Bill nurtured their six children, whose friends, together with Joyce’s extended family, would for decades receive handwritten birthday and anniversary wishes, congratulatory notes, and condolences. Joyce recorded those dates with meticulous hand-written entries on calendars she hung on her kitchen wall, color-coded for the occasion. And she relished the expressions of joy when she handed out iconic two-dollar “Jefferson” bills to children of all ages, whether she knew them or not. Her smile was even bigger than theirs. Joyce worked, played, acted, gambled, and entertained friends and family with her delightfully irreverent humor. When Joyce successfully auditioned for a new role (as “Granny”) in her grandchildren’s lives, she became an anchor of love for future generations.

Though she mourned the deaths of Celeste and Bill, she knew she would soon join them in her next act. Joyce’s last lines were all about appreciation and gratitude for her life and her family. THE DIRECTOR lowered the curtain on Joyce’s final TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL on November 10, 2019. She received an awesome ovation.

Joyce is survived by five children, her brother Stanley Olivier, sisters Yvonne Collier and Frances Bryant, many grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Sunday, November 24, 2019 at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North, 3401 Cherry Ridge Drive from 5:30

pm to 7:00 pm. The Funeral Service will take place 12 noon, Monday, November 25, at the Funeral Home Chapel. Interment will follow at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery at 1:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, you may wish to make a memorial contribution to the Salvation Army in the name of Bill & Joyce Jefferson.

# Cemetery Details

## Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

1520 Harry Wurzbach  
San Antonio, TX 78209

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **24**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Mission Burial Park North

## Service

NOV **25**. 12:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge  
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
(210) 349-1414  
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Every memory of my mom was beautiful, and so treasured in my heart! Mom, you were love to myself and my brothers, and my sister! I miss you so...yet what brings me comfort is i know your in heaven and walking with dad and Celeste! Bless you Mom, til we meet again!!*

Roxanne Jones (daughter) - December 10, 2019 at 08:06 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joyce Virginia Jefferson.*



November 24, 2019 at 12:10 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joyce Virginia Jefferson.*



November 23, 2019 at 12:13 PM

AM

“ My beautiful Joyce Virginia Jefferson. . .what grace you brought to everything you did. . .from my earliest childhood memories at Lackland AFB to Southwest Research Institute (SwRI). Even more wonderful was the reuniting of you and my brother, as you cast him in his first play as "The Littlest Angel" (Lackland) and you were paired up again at SwRI. How blessed were we, as Air Force families, to be reunited again. . .that sometimes does not happen very often and in God's graciousness He allowed that to happen. You will find JM as an angel in heaven as he was called home in 1998 and always remember, you gave him his start. My deepest heartfelt condolences to your beautiful family and with gratitude that the Jefferson family graced the lives of the Strum family many, many, years ago at Chanute Court, Lackland AFB.



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**Alberta "Birdie" (Strum) Matthews** - November 14, 2019 at 07:16 PM

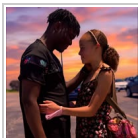
WJ

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Wallace B. Jefferson** - November 14, 2019 at 05:18 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Joy Jackson** - November 14, 2019 at 11:11 AM

GD

“ I never met Joyce, but having known three of her children, she must have been an amazing woman. It was especially meaningful to read of her vast connection to the theatre, and how it has played out in Leah's life. My prayers and condolences to all her family.  
Gail Dalrymple, Austin

Gail Dalrymple - November 14, 2019 at 10:43 AM

MS

“ I am struggling with the right words to express my sorrow at the loss of Mrs. Jefferson but at the same time to share how wonderful it was to ever have known her. She definitely passed on her warm, welcoming personality to her children. Every single one of them. Thinking back to my high school days ... No matter how many times I popped in with Celeste (and not so quietly I might add as energetic teenagers can do) I was always met with the warmest smile and most heartfelt greeting. Loved that so much and those memories are still so strong.  
The world has lost a most gracious woman. We could all do well by emulating her.

Misty Sumner - November 14, 2019 at 09:15 AM



“ Vivid Recollections was purchased for the family of Joyce Virginia Jefferson.



November 13, 2019 at 08:09 PM