

## Clara Jo Claborn

Clara Jo Claborn, nee Pelphrey, was born January 21, 1939, in Paintsville, Kentucky, to the parents of James H. Pelphrey, Jr. and Sue Elizabeth (Prather) Pelphrey. She was reared in Kentucky and Ohio. After graduating from High School, she continued her studies at Western Kentucky State College. She attained a bachelor's degree with a major in French and minors in Music and Art, graduating magna cum laude.

While pursuing her degree at Western Kentucky State College, Clara Jo was active in student events and those of her community. She was director of the Baptist Student Union choir, sang in the choir of the Bowling Green First Baptist Church and practiced organ playing under the beloved "Miss Nell," the church organist. She had a beautiful soprano voice which she used while singing in the church choir, directing the BSU choir, directing youth choirs, and singing at weddings.

In her junior year in college, she met Gilbert Lawayne

Claborn, whom she married as she began her senior year at Western. Their first child, James, was born soon after Clara Jo received her bachelor's degree. After graduating, she taught music for one year. Before the next school year began, however, Clara Jo delivered their next child, a daughter, Susan. Five years later, after moving with her husband and family to Louisville, she bore her third child, a daughter, Cathy.

Clara Jo was beautiful, talented, and hard working, She managed her family while teaching, then working as a bank cashier. Later in life, she was able to pursue some of her personal pleasures in the creation of art. She was more than adept at painting, and, once introduced to it, found her greatest pleasure in the creation of ceramics. For the seven or eight years she was involved in it, she said it was the most pleasurable thing she ever did. She created dozens of busts, plaques, and other ceramic pieces. Another of her great pleasures was traveling, which she did with her husband and her husband's sister, Glenda. She was an avid shopper and a prolific reader.

Her beautiful smile reflected her pleasure in life!

Clara Jo died a peaceful death on July 14, 2025, as I held her hand. She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Sue Pelphrey, and her sister, Sue Loraine. She is survived by her husband, Gilbert, of Homewood, Alabama, her son, James and his wife, Jeannette, of Irondale, Alabama, and two daughters, Susan, of Trussville, Alabama, and Cathy, who provides a home for Gilbert and lives with her husband, Jim Green, in Homewood.

While Clara Jo will be sorely missed, she was beautiful and created much beauty for us to enjoy. The greatest and most beautiful of those treasures are her three children, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Her art is still here for us to enjoy, but her smile and her beauty will be remembered for our lifetimes.