



## Shirlita Jean Watson-Bolton

February 29, 1932 - January 9, 2019

Shirlita H. Bolton, 86, of Orlando, Florida, passed away on January 9, 2019 at Cornerstone Hospice & Palliative Care. She was born on February 29, 1932 in Kingsport, Tennessee to Maurice Lee Hutchins and Alberta Jane Hutchins (Foglesong). Her parents named her Shirley Jean Hutchins. She attended Dobbins Bennett High School in Kingsport. She and her husband Herb Blizzard moved to Washington, D.C. when she was 19 years old so he could work in the construction field. He would later return to Kingsport, but Lita, as she would be known, preferred the exciting big city to small town life, and remained while the couple divorced. While working for the Washington Star Newspaper, she was attracted to the growing Civil Rights movement in the 1950s. She married Captain Joseph L. Stephenson, a veteran WWII Buffalo Soldier when interracial marriage was illegal in many states and disapproved of by society in general. They had two children, Sheridan "Steve" L. Stephenson and Jolene M. Stephenson (Ivey). Lita met Ivory Deek Watson, an original member of the Ink Spots, during visits to Las Vegas, Nevada. She would eventually divorce Joseph and marry Deek, which began her career in the entertainment industry. She traveled the world as the Ink Spots road manager. Deek unexpectedly died in November 1969 in Washington, D.C. where the couple resided between tours. Lita relocated to Los Angeles, California, where she worked for a local television station and with the Whiting Agency which represented actors in the television and film industry.

She married Dodge Bolton in 1973, a past Music Director of the Ink Spots. The couple moved to Orlando, Florida in 1976. The Walt Disney Co. hired Dodge as a musician. Lita created Music Unlimited in 1988, a talent agency. Supportive of the Musicians Union, she held an American Federation of Musician Booking Agent License.

She continued the work of her agency, wrote and self published a novel and co-produced a short children's film after the death of Dodge in 1993. She was working on a film adaptation of a book about the Ink Spots, which she co-authored with Deek in 1967, until her failing health slowed her down. In her final years, Lita fought several health issues, including COPD. She lived in the same house in Orlando, located in the Pine Hills

community, since she and Dodge bought it in 1976. When suggested that she move after her husband's passing, she refused, stating, "I have good neighbors."

Lita was a colorful, strong, unique, independent woman who led a very interesting life, occasionally unorthodox, and she did it boldly, sometimes bravely, but always "her way." She was an avid reader and animal lover having many pets throughout her life. She was instrumental in getting a dog park installed in her local community. She took pride and pleasure in the accomplishments of her children and grandsons. She was generous to others with her time, money and opinions. She loved to tell stories about her life experiences and encounters with famous people such as Elvis Presley, Burt Reynolds, Louis Armstrong, Ray Kroc and Martin Luther King, Jr. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is survived by her son, Sheridan L. Stephenson, his wife Crystal, of Gotha, Florida; and daughter Jolene M. Ivey, her husband, Glenn, of Cheverly, Maryland; grandsons Alexander Ivey, David Ivey, Julian Ivey, Troy Ivey and Aaron Ivey; brothers Bill Hutchins, Larry Hutchins, sister Marcella Churchwell and uncle Pete Hutchins. She is predeceased by her brother, Dennis Hutchins.

A "Celebration of Life" will be held on Saturday March 2, 2019 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at her home. For more information about the celebration, call 407-293-2075. Leave a message. Your call will be returned.

The family asks that donations in Lita's name be made to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) to which she was a long time member.

# Comments

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“ I will never forget the day Lita called the office (State Farm) and said she needed dog car insurance. I had never heard of it. We had a good laugh once I realized she had bought a car just to take the dogs to the dog park because of the hair they leave in the car. It Embarrassed her when someone rode in her car and when they got out, they were covered with dog hair. So she insured her dog car. She was the sweetest lady I ever met with a heart of gold but I also saw where you better treat her right or you were in big trouble. I always enjoyed her stories and she was a lady of many talents. And she loved her animals. I loved her dearly and she will be missed



**Diana** - February 17, 2019 at 04:38 PM