



Members of The Garden Club of Water Valley planted a tree on Arbor Day, February 11, at the entrance of the Water Valley High School softball field with the help of players. The group includes Ginger Bennett (left), President Jeanette Whitehead, vice-president Rebecca Phillips and Kayla Cofield. The pink dogwood was planted in honor of BB Thomas.

## Garden Club Plants Tree In Honor Of BB Thomas

A MONTHLY REPORT FROM  
*The Garden Club of Water Valley*  
by Jennifer Whitehead Lucus



February was a wonderful month for the Garden Club of WV. On Arbor Day, Feb 11th two members of the club, President Jeanette Whitehead and Vice President, Rebecca Phillips and two members of the Water Valley High School softball team planted a pink dogwood at the entrance of the softball field in honor of our past member, BB Thomas.

At a later date we are going to have a ceremony with a plaque that will be placed in front of the tree. Also, more work will be done at the softball field including planting bushes and flowers in front of the marquee.

We were so very honored to have guest speaker, Carol Bullard, at our February meeting that was held February 21 at the

Wesley House.

Our program was about butterflies and how they migrate, what types of flowers attract them, and many different interesting facts regarding the lifespan from beginning to end of the butterfly. The program was called MS Sweet Sixteen.

All members that attended enjoyed a baked potato bar, homemade butterfly and flower cookies, homemade chocolate cake, and a variety of dips and sodas. We appreciate the First United Methodist Church of Water Valley for letting us use the Wesley House and for all the members who were able to attend.

We have more in store for the next several months and can't wait to keep you posted on our plans ahead.

### Garden tip of the month:

Clean your annual and perennial flower beds. Add compost to the soil and add more mulch to the beds. Happy Gardening!



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# The Lady – The Leader – The Legacy – My Mother – Georgia Lee Ford

By Reverend Jacqueline Blackburn

Georgia Lee Ford is affectionately called “Lady G,” I, however, am most proud and blessed to call her my Momma. I am her only biological child – she refers to me as Alpha Omega. She has many other children, being a mother figure to those throughout the family, school, church, and community. I grew up sharing my mother with her students, her siblings, nieces and nephews, their children, and church and community children, near and far. Her nurturing and calming spirit attracts the innocent spirit of every child she meets. She always has words of wisdom and encouragement to give whenever and wherever needed. She is the proud grandmother to Keishia (Aaron, Sr.), DeShaun, Sr., Bradley, and Adrianna, a loving great-grandmother (GiGi) to DeShaun, Jr., Kristian, Amaya, Myracle, Shekinah, the twins – Aaron, Jr. and Angel, Brianna, and Ledgen, and great-great grandmother to K. J. and Ari.



Georgia Lee Ford is pictured at the North Panola Prom in 1999

As you see, my mother wears many hats and wears them well, not just those big beautiful “church” hats, but more specifically the blessed hats gifted to her by God. Teaching is her gift and her calling. Her love for children and her passion for learning led her right into that gifting. Just like her father, Reverend Raymond Ford, Sr., a teacher, she followed in his footsteps. For 40 years beginning with Student Teaching in Meridian, MS to Davidson High School in Water Valley, MS to Rosa Fort High School in Tunica MS to North Panola High School in Sardis, she walked in that calling serving as math teacher, assistant coach, Tri-Hi-Y / Hi-Y Advisor, cheerleader sponsor, Jr-Sr class sponsor, ticket taker, and so much more.

Teaching math and advising yet she was still imparting wisdom in life lessons by adding snippets from the Sunday School lessons. She always said to me that you must teach by example because someone is always watching and observing what you do. That is exactly what she did, taught by example. She was firm, yet fun, consistent, yet caring and concerned, she said what she meant, and she meant what she said. Her presence alone commanded respect across the board – students, faculty, and administrators.

When I would go to school events, I would hear the students say that Ms. Ford didn't play. They had to come correct in her class. The young men said that they had to pull their pants up and wear a belt and no hat wearing in her classroom. After all the chatter, it would end with, “Ms. Ford straight – she's a good teacher,” which made me smile because I knew my mother was a good teacher and I was glad they knew it too. She laid out the rules and expectations. The students' job was to follow through to completion. She always had the best interest of the students in mind and at heart. She would meet you where you were and help and encourage you to move forward to rise to your potential.

Although I didn't attend North Panola High School, those same expectations were set for me at home - no gray areas. I am so appreciative of the structure and en-

couragement that I received, which has been passed down to my children and grandchildren and in my workplace and church. While my mother was teaching in Water Valley and Tunica, I was home in Sardis with her parents, Raymond and Bernice. When she was away, she made sure that I had what I needed and then some. Her seven younger siblings were there too, and she made sure their needs were met as well. She made us all feel special and loved.

Fast forward some years, I witnessed her giving that same special care to both of her parents until they transitioned. I remember her going to the hospital to stay with my grandmother, coming home in the mornings to dress for school, and repeating that cycle daily.

She never complained nor did she miss a beat in making sure my needs were met. She did the same with my grandfather. Now she and her youngest brother live in the “home” house where she cares for him, with consistent help from her youngest sister and family who live in Oxford, MS. They make sure the love is felt and that he is wanting for nothing.

My mother has always been strong, consistent, structured, and articulate. She is a firm believer in doing your best and putting your best foot forward. She encourages everyone that she meets to do just that. This wasn't only in the classroom but everywhere she went from the schoolhouse to the church house from the grocery store to her front door. My mother believes in striving for excellence in all she does which is the legacy she continues to pass on to her family, the church, the community and everyone who crosses her path.

She has a servant's heart, and you can see it as she works faithfully in the church and her local community. Affectionately known as “The Hat Lady,” her community efforts are as diverse as her extensive hat collection. She willingly offers her time and expertise to those areas of need. With her Christian upbringing, it is evident that she is rooted and grounded in her faith in God. As she was trained and learned skills while serving as the Sunday school secretary, this has been beneficial as she continues to serve as the official record keeper for New Life Missionary Baptist Church, the Sardis District Baptist Association, and the MLK Commemorative committee. She instilled in me that serving the Lord will pay off and only what you do for Christ will last.

Family is very important to her. She is always willing to lend a helping hand or lend a listening ear. She is a wealth of knowledge, a historian for the family, the church, and the community. She comes from a legacy of strength, and I consider her to be “the family Cornerstone.” She is the anchor, the rock, that center that holds our family in the road, keeping us all together. She lives in the “home” house and that is the focal gathering place for everyone. She loves her family and would do just about anything for us. She continues to serve with a smile, showing love and speaking encouragement. In looking at “Lady G” and the influence that she has, I wanted to include input from some of the younger family members. This is what they had to say about “Lady G”:

#### Aunt Georgia is:

- Fabulous / Fierce / Fine;
- Caring, courageous, kind, Godly, optimistic – she is a leader who the family looks up to;
- Big sister, proud, family first, leader, laughter;
- Strong but tender, fiercely loyal, confident, compassionate, caring – she embodies the attributes of Christ: Love in Action; her love is as big as her hats;
- The strongest woman I know
- One of God's angels – she brings forth good fruit - Galatians 5:22 “ But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.”
- Wise, witty, faithful, Queen boss, loving – dedicated servant leader who exudes and demands excellence of herself and all in her realm of influence;

- Classy, supportive, loving, dedicated, wise – the epitome of strength, class, and commitment;
- Loving, determined, strong, funny, legendary - God-fearing loving woman who inspires through her determination and love;
- Strong, leader, fashionable, charismatic, Legend - she is rock solid;
- Fashionable, funny, honest, supportive, timeless – she is loyal and a hard-working woman who is committed to her family, her faith, and her fashion;

#### GiGi is:

- Fun, silly, loving, caring, rich;
- She is a very fun person who always makes us laugh and sends us things because she loves us'

#### Cousin Georgia Lee is:

- A woman of wisdom and knowledge, lovable, kind and sweet and she will give you her last;
- A woman of influence, integrity, and inspiration; determined, diligent, devoted – She's the REAL!

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