



Ruth Douglas Oakley Lauderdale

November 1, 1922 - November 5, 2014

RUTH DOUGLAS OAKLEY LAUDERDALE, 92

LAKELAND - Ruth Douglas Oakley Lauderdale passed away Wednesday, November 5, 2014, after a long and rewarding life at age 92. Her sweetness and southern charm were loved by all with whom she came into contact. She was preceded in death by her husband Jerles Robert Lauderdale; mother Clara Thomas Oakley; father John Tella Oakley; sister Jean Oakley Caruthers and brother John David Oakley. Ruth, known as Granny and Granny Dumplings to family, grew up in the small town of Lafayette, Tennessee, where she shared her childhood with her sister and two brothers. She learned the art of cooking and baking at an early age and delighted all with her talents if they were fortunate enough to share a meal with her. She married a fellow Tennessean in Jerles, following high school graduation. They welcomed their only child, Ron, in Atlanta, where they lived for a brief time before permanently moving to Florida. Her inner strength and work ethic were evident as she was one of the first females to join the Lakeland Police Department, and worked until her retirement, after more than twenty years of service. She served on many task forces, including domestic violence investigations and subsequent arrests. In 1960, she was appointed as the first woman corporal of the Lakeland Police Department. One of her most treasured assignments as a law enforcement officer was to protect Elvis Presley when he performed at the Polk Theatre in Lakeland in 1956. She was as tough on the outside as she was sweet on the inside. She always found the good in everything and

everyone, and was consistently helping others through words of encouragement. She was the best mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great grandmother, friend and neighbor one could have. She embraced all with open arms, a smile and the sweetest laugh. Her love for her family and faith sustained her throughout her years. Her generous spirit, her gracious hospitality and her goodness will always be dear to her family and friends. In many ways, she was a special angel on earth.

She is survived by her son Ron and daughter-in-law Leah Bellotto Lauderdale; granddaughter Elisa Lauderdale Holmes and her husband Tim Holmes; great grandchildren Alex Holmes, Oakley Holmes, Jolie Holmes, and brother James Donald Oakley.

A graveside service was held by the family at the Oak Hill Burial Park, Lakeland, on November 12, 2014. The family would like to sincerely thank the staff at Hawthorne Inn of Lakeland, assisted living facility, for helping to care for and love this special, selfless woman.