



## Leona Berken Smaihall

May 26, 1924 - December 23, 2016

Leona Hensgens Berken Smaihall

Jennings: It is with a mixture of honor and sorrow that the family announces the passing of Leona Hensgens Berken Smaihall on December 23, 2016, while surrounded by her family and loved ones. As a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, she exemplified her deep Catholic faith through her words, deeds, and actions in her daily life.

For over 70 years, she has been a huge supporter of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, St. Maria Goretti School, Our Lady of Seven Dolors, and the Catholic Daughters. Her works of mercy were many. In the early years, she taught religion classes in her home in Thornwell. As a member of the church and Catholic Daughters, she brought communion to the sick and shut-ins, prepared food for funerals, and said rosaries for hundreds of wakes at funeral homes. Throughout those years she recited the rosary at the nursing home on Thursdays and then distributed communion to the residents. She was present for First Communion for all of her great-grandchildren. As a Catholic Daughter, she carried out the motto of charity and unity for more than 60 years with perfect attendance most of those years. She was inducted into the order of St. Lazarus, an order dedicated to the care and assistance of the poor and sick.

Leona married Herman Lawrence Berken on January 30, 1946. They had seven children, as well as 32 grandchildren, and 36 great-grandchildren with two more due in February and March. After the passing of Herman, Leona married Louis Smaihall at the young age of 79 and gained a daughter, as well as two granddaughters and three great-grandchildren.

Leona leaves behind her three sons, Stephen Berken (Daphne), Clarence Berken (Karen), and Kevin Berken (Shirley) all of Lake Arthur, LA; her four daughters, Charlotte Ann Conner (Ken) and Martha Stevens (Homer, II) both of Houston, TX, Rachel Andrus (Tom) of Eunice, LA, Mary Gayle Moses (Todd) and her step-daughter, Suzanne Cornelius, both of Houston, TX; her sister, Clarice Gautreaux of Thibodeaux, LA; her 34 grandchildren and 39 great-grandchildren with two more on the way to cherish her memories.

Leona is now rejoicing in heaven with her parents, Joseph and Anna Reiners Hensgens; her first husband, Herman Berken; her second husband Louis Smaihall; her daughter-in-law, Melanie Berken; her granddaughters, Elizabeth Stevens, Jeanne Catherine Berken, Jennifer Lauren Berken, and Leah Kathryn Berken; along with Leona's five siblings and spouses.

A Mass of Christian Burial to honor Leona's life will be held at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Lake Arthur, LA, on Tuesday, December 27 2016 at 10:30 AM with Father Jay Alexius officiating. Burial will follow in Thornwell Cemetery. Visitation will be held at Matthews & Son Funeral Home in Jennings, LA, on Monday, December 26th from 12:00 PM until 9:00 PM. A rosary will be recited on Monday, December 26th at 6:00 PM. The family request that her visitation resume on Tuesday, December 27th at 8:00 AM until the time of her Funeral Mass.

Carrying Leona to her final resting place in Thornwell Cemetery will be Stephen Berken, Clarence Berken, Kevin Berken, Ken Conner, Homer

Stevens, II, Tom Andrus, and Todd Moses. Honorary Pallbearers will be A.T. Smith, Doyle Borchgardt, Sara Borchgardt and Katherine Smith.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks to please consider making a donation to a Catholic school of your choice.

To extend online condolences, please visit our website at [www.matthewsandsonfuneralhome.net](http://www.matthewsandsonfuneralhome.net)

Arrangements have been entrusted to Matthews & Son Funeral Home.

# Cemetery Details

## Thornwell Cemetery

Dorion Rd  
Thornwell, LA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **26**. 12:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Matthews Funeral Home - JENNINGS  
511 N. Cutting Avenue  
Jennings, LA 70546  
(337) 824-4420  
jimmy@matthewsfh.com  
<https://www.matthewsandsonfuneralhome.net/>

## Rosary

DEC **26**. 6:00 PM (CT)

Matthews Funeral Home - JENNINGS  
511 N. Cutting Avenue  
Jennings, LA 70546  
(337) 824-4420  
jimmy@matthewsfh.com  
<https://www.matthewsandsonfuneralhome.net/>

## Visitation

DEC 27. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Matthews Funeral Home - JENNINGS  
511 N. Cutting Avenue  
Jennings, LA 70546  
(337) 824-4420  
jimmy@matthewsfh.com  
<https://www.matthewsandsonfuneralhome.net/>

## Service

DEC 27. 10:30 AM (CT)

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church  
203 Commercial St.  
Lake Arthur, LA 70549

# Tribute Wall



“ *Leona Berken Smaihall*

January 28, 2023 at 04:12 PM



“ *Anna and family. I am so very sorry for your loss. Your family is and will be in my prayers.*

*Susan East*

**Susan East** - December 28, 2016 at 07:44 AM



“ *Charlotte and Family, Extending my heartfelt sympathy to all of you at this time. With a prayer. Susan Storm*

**Susan Lanthier Storm** - December 27, 2016 at 11:35 AM



“ *Susan Lanthier Storm lit a candle in memory of Leona Berken Smaihall*



**Susan Lanthier Storm** - December 27, 2016 at 11:31 AM

GB

“ *Condolences to the Berken family as you mourn, as well as celebrate her beautiful life. What an exemplary matriarch! As you celebrate her life today, I am sure each of you will feel her hand on your shoulder in comfort. May her wonderful spirit sustain you evermore in moments of trial. We will all miss "Grandma".* Gay Lynne Boutte

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**Gay Lynne Boutte** - December 27, 2016 at 10:19 AM

YA

“ *Your Energy Transfer Family-South Div, Cypr Area purchased the Dish Garden with Fresh Cut Flowers for the family of Leona Berken Smaihall.*



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**Your Energy Transfer Family-South Div, Cypr Area** -  
December 27, 2016 at 08:50 AM

EW

“ Dear Family...Please accept my deepest sympathy on the loss of your loved one. May the God of all comfort encourage you and continue to keep you during this time of transition. Ms. Essie M. Wells (Energy Transfer / Trunkline Gas Company)

*For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words. - 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 (NIV)*

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**Essie M. Wells** - December 27, 2016 at 07:55 AM

FL

“ The one thing I remember about Ms Leona was she always greeted you with a smile and always left you laughing. My thoughts and prayers are with her family during this difficult time. God bless and keep everyone.  
*Frances Lopez*

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**Frances Lopez** - December 26, 2016 at 07:40 PM



“ Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Leona Berken Smaihall.



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December 26, 2016 at 05:08 PM

MI

“ A Great Life that made a lasting impact on many. She lived free. That is she lived free of what people thought. Not that she did not care about what people thought, but what they thought of her did not diminish nor marginalize her spirit. She left 'an empty cup'. By that I mean she drank her life to the very last drop. She lived a 'free' life, and she lived a 'full' life. And she left us many, many memories. Thank you Ms Leona

Mickey Istre - December 26, 2016 at 04:02 PM

KK

“ Kirk & Nettie Kuykendall purchased the European Sympathy Dish Garden for the family of Leona Berken Smaihall.



Kirk & Nettie Kuykendall - December 26, 2016 at 03:24 PM

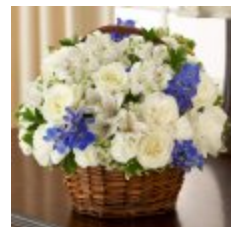
WG

“ Ms. Leona. I will miss our dance on Tuesday night when we used to dance to "Lets chase each other around the room tonight" . You will be missed greatly. Wayne Guidry

Wayne Guidry - December 26, 2016 at 01:38 PM

TF

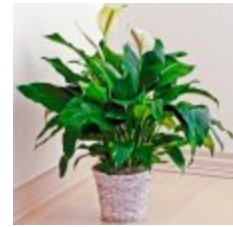
“ The Crabtree Family purchased the Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White for the family of Leona Berken Smaihall.



The Crabtree Family - December 26, 2016 at 12:55 PM



“ *Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Leona Berken Smaihall.*



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December 26, 2016 at 09:47 AM



“ *To all the Berkin family, my deepest condolences. I don't remember not knowing your mom and dad. We used to spend every Saturday night together while our parents played cards. Good memories . She'll be missed. Welsh and Lake Arthur will not be the same. Rest in pease.*  
*David & Janice Benoit*

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**David Benoit** - December 26, 2016 at 08:47 AM



“ *One of the strongest people I've ever known. I will never forget the emotional moment we had together at my grandmother's funeral. God bless.*

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**Stephen Berger** - December 25, 2016 at 07:00 PM



“ *Heaven, surely gained another angel, Leona was a great person, I used to enjoy dancing with her at the Habibi Temple.. I know there is dancing in Heaven now for sure.. Bless you Leona, till we meet again and dance another Waltz... RIP my friend...*

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**Mike Fauchaux** - December 25, 2016 at 06:07 PM

FP

“ We are so sorry for your loss, your mother will be missed greatly. She was an awesome woman.

*Franklin & Norma Price*

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**Franklin & Norma Price** - December 25, 2016 at 07:53 AM

JS

“ My guess is there's dancin' goin' on in Heaven right now, and I'll give you one guess who's leadin' the pack! I've seen Leona tear up the floor at the Ravensway 4th of July festivities and she left most everyone out of breath. Praise God for the gifts her gave her of a warm heart and wonderful smile, and for the wonderful daughter she raised by the name of Martha. I'd love to hear about what it was like when Martha's husband Homer II first met Leona! I'm bettin' on there being at least one hug in that exchange! Rest In Peace, Leona. We're not gonna say goodbye, we'll just say, "See ya later"!

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**John Schilberg** - December 24, 2016 at 04:32 PM

LD

“ Heaven had gained another angel. My sympathies are sent to my dear friends-her family. I loved Mrs Leona. She and I connected on a level that left both of us laughing. She will be sorely missed.  
*Lorraine C Dees*

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**Lorraine C Dees** - December 24, 2016 at 08:10 AM



“ *White Sympathy Baskets was purchased for the family of Leona Berken Smahall.* ”



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December 24, 2016 at 05:54 AM