



CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LOVE OF
Dorothy Valenti

April 6, 1927 - December 7, 2025



I was born on Wednesday, April 6, 1927 in Luttrell, Tennessee.

I was so fortunate to grow up in a community where everyone knew and cared about the needs of others. The younger generation respected their elders, and it was just good manners to call older people "Aunt" or "Uncle," even though they were not relatives. They were your extended family, and it seemed there was no discrimination among families who had more or those who had less.

I'm told that our family was the first in the Luttrell community to have a radio. I remember also that our neighbors would come to our house and gather around the radio to listen to the prize fighting events. Our home was also a place where those who chose to do so brought their instruments and played their favorite tunes. Dad played the violin (fiddle) and was quite talented.

I was always fond of animals, particularly dogs. I also had a white rabbit and a baby yellow duck which followed me whenever I made a trip to Jim Monroe's General Store.

Taking a trip to this store was a highlight for a small country girl. One could take an egg to the store (in place of money) and swap the egg for several pieces of candy. Choosing the candy was a difficult decision—there was a large selection and, of course, one always wanted to be sure that the egg was traded wisely. If one of my pets died, they were properly buried—even a goldfish was placed in a matchbox and given a proper burial.

The shoe repair shop was one of my favorite places—the shoemaker was a slender man, wearing small, wire-framed glasses. He had a crippled foot and seemed to walk bent over and to one side. He lived in the back room of the shoe repair shop.



R. K. O BUILDING



Old posters were hung near the ceiling all around the room. One poster read, "PLEASE DON'T SPIT ON THE FLOOR – REMEMBER THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD." Now, as a small girl, I didn't understand what that meant, but I was hesitant to ask Mr. Popejoy—I'm sure he would have been glad to educate me on this.

I was quite an inquisitive child, always thinking and wondering about many things. An older neighbor I called Aunt Kit stopped by for a visit. While she was sitting on the front porch swing (and I on the front porch step), I had a question which I thought she could answer. I had been looking at the beautiful sunshine and the sky and wondered about God. So I said, "Aunt Kit, where did God come from?" Without a moment's hesitation, she answered, "That aint none of my business, all I know is that He is." I suppose that answered my question—I accepted that, and now I'm just as sure as she was that—HE IS! That is one thing we don't question.

On Easter Sunday, our Sunday School class would meet early at the church. We were taken to the foot of Signal Point Mountain, a site which was used as a lookout point, and were taught our Sunday School lesson. It was a time of reverence and a celebration of the resurrection of our Lord.

My sister Opal and I could sing well together—our voices just seemed to harmonize. When I was about 8 or 9 years old, and she was around 11, we sang at the WNOX Radio Station in Knoxville.

We sang a religious song, "What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?" We received big applause from the audience. Mother said she saw the WNOX staff watching our performance and heard people say, "Those girls are really good." Later, in our early teen years, Roy Acuff (the Grandaddy of the Grand Ole' Opry) wrote a letter asking us to come to the Grand Ole' Opry to sing. Dad didn't allow us to go. So, you see, Gram had talent but didn't get the chance to shine. I hope that you will always have your opportunity to shine and to give it your very best.

I was a 4-H Club member. This was an organization for those living in rural areas. We were taught crafts, gardening, and canning—all the skills one needed to become a good homemaker. Every year, the girls from our region would go to Big Ridge State Park for three days just to swim and have fun. Mother went as a chaperone. We stayed in cabins near a big lodge where we learned crafts, played games, and ate the most delicious meals. Every night, we would sing a goodnight song to the kids in the next cabin. Lights were turned off when the song reached the last cabin. We anxiously looked forward to the next day of fun.

During World War II, many 18-year-old young men from our school were drafted into the service prior to high school graduation. It was a sad time for our country. Many of my friends gave their lives for this cause, and it was a time of patriotism and love for one's country.

I graduated from high school in May 1943. I had just turned 16 years old in April. In June 1943, I began my first job in communications with Western Union in Knoxville. I lived at home, and since there was only one bus into Knoxville that left at 5 a.m., I had to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning to make sure I didn't miss my only transportation to the city.



Later, after getting through training at Western Union, I had to move to Knoxville, where I lived with a wonderful family on Woodrow Avenue and Broadway in the Fountain City area. They became another extended family, and I learned to love them very much.

I was training to be a multiplex/teletype operator at Western Union. This is how telegrams were sent. An operator was required to work quickly and with very few typing errors. In the school, one had to type 300 telegrams with not more than one mistake in 100 telegrams. If more than that, the student had to begin again and nothing previously done was counted. This kind of discipline may be why some people today call me a perfectionist. I do believe your first job sets the pattern of future work habits.

Within a short while, I was asked to teach the communications school for Western Union. I was accepted and was proud of the students who graduated under my teaching.

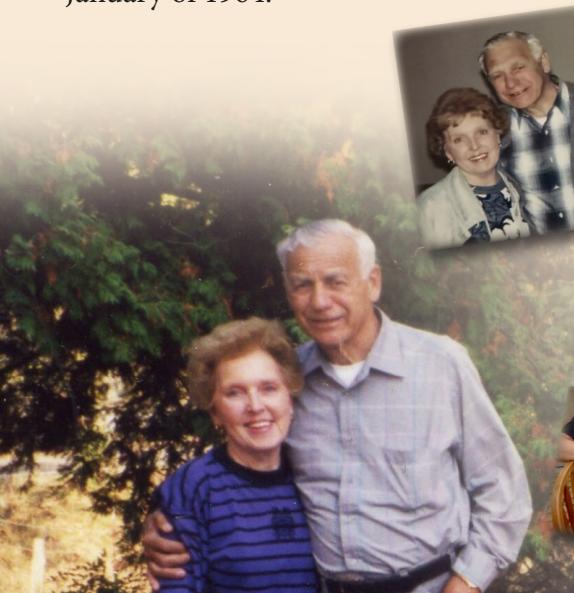
During the war, messages were sent in secret code, and one had to be perfect handling this type of code. In fact, at the end of every message, which could be very long, the operator had to "confirm" the coded message, which meant it had to be typed again, then it was carefully compared with the previous type. Any code which was different had to be questioned. The majority of these kinds of messages were sent to the Oak Ridge National Labs in Oak Ridge, TN (which was instrumental in the making of the atomic bomb).

When I was 19 years old, I was sent by Western Union to work in the Miami, Florida office for three months. Tourist season was in the winter months, and the Miami office needed additional operators. I felt honored to be asked to go, along with a friend of mine. We took the Seaboard Railway to Miami and had Pullman accommodations.



I lived off of Bayshore Drive at 11th Street, just across from the bay. My friend and I made plans to visit Cuba but had to cancel because we were called back to Knoxville one week before our scheduled visit. This was disappointing. The experience working and living in Miami was a good one and one I will always remember.

It was on a trip to Cincinnati that I met Lou Valenti, through a cousin of mine living in Cincinnati. This was around 1963. I realized there was something really nice and special about him after several visits to Knoxville, many letters and phone calls. Lou asked me to marry him. We felt our lives would be better and enriched if we were together. On November 27, 1963, we were married at McCalla Avenue Baptist Church in Knoxville, TN. We moved to Erlanger, KY in January of 1964.



Obituary

Dorothy Seals Valenti (Dottie) age 98 of Erlanger, passed away December 7, 2025. She was born April 6, 1927 in Luttrell, TN and was the daughter of Julia and Esther Seals.

Dottie was preceded in death by her husband, Louis Valenti; her brothers, Ed Seals, Glen Seals, Tommy Seals, and her sisters; Opal Hubbs and Ruby Donahue.

She was retired from Prudential Bache Securities, Cincinnati, OH.

She was a member of the Erlanger Baptist Church where she taught third-firth grade Sunday School. Sharing the Gospel with children, watching them grow in their knowledge of the Bible as they grew in faith was a priority for her.

Dottie and Lou created many memories as they toured the United States with friends. She especially loved the unique 10-day annual "summer explores" with her grandsons.

Her favorite was diamond mining in Arkansas; a close second was the grand billboard adventure.

She always marveled at God's creation from finding art in the white clouds against the blue sky, searching for the little girl's face she found in a full moon as a child (she always found it thereafter), wondering what creature lived in each seashell she found in the sand, to the Smokey mountains that she loved so much.

Dottie is survived by her daughter, Paula Long (Jonathan); two grandsons: Justin Long (Irene), Preston Long (Jennifer) and two great grandchildren: Avery Shaye Long and Alistair Kennt Long.

She will be missed for her wisdom, her counsel and her stories.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Erlanger Baptist Church and earmarked for Children and Youth Ministries.



1994

"MEMORIES OF HOME"

Home - a white bungalow
Atop of the hill
Where neighbors were welcomed
to sit for a spell
On the front porch swing
Which was sheltered from the sun
With a fragrant vine, that had been strung
By a mother's hands
Which were then so young

The sweet scent of lilacs
Mimosas, with their lacey leaves
An American flag, proudly blowing in the breeze
A song warbled by a mockingbird, high in a tree
My - what a tranquil place to be

Laundry hung on the clothesline to dry
As Mother sang a hymn of days gone by
Lace curtains in stretchers
pulled tight as a drum
Casting shadows on the grass
from the noonday sun

An apple orchard with its smell of ripened fruit
Beckoned all little boys'
"Climb the fence - enjoy!"

A kitchen always filled
with good things to eat
Fresh churned butter,
sugar cookies, apple stack cakes and custard pie
Goodies that made, our eyes open wide

Home - the place where we felt secure and loved
A Mother and Dad
who through 79 years of marriage
Taught us the meaning of love, commitment and sacrifice

Mother has gone to her mansion in Heaven
Dad is still home, growing old in his life
Still loving and missing
"Julie" - his wife.

Mother died March 1, 1989 (age 96 years)
Dad died April 7, 1997 (age 102 years)



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