



# Emily Klotzteal Smith

August 30, 1927 - January 1, 2021

## My Life Story

It all began in a small town somewhere between Texas and Louisiana. I was born on August 30th and the 9th child of James Albert Miller and Jennie Miller. To my surprise, I was told I was born in Colmesneil, Texas, but to date, that can not be verified (where is my birth certificate?!?!) Later, my family moved to San Pedro, California. When I was 16 and wanted to work, my father took me to the family doctor for a letter and so now my life begins. I attended San Pedro High School and worked at the cannery. Being one of 13 children, I quickly grasped the lesson of caring for myself, reading and educating myself in every area. I loved to cook and care for people. I owned a little cafe in San Pedro called BenJean's as I was always looking to further myself in life, this helped me to sharpen my cooking skills, rising early each day. Growing up a Miller was the best, my Dad was a reader and my Mom was a cooker, and then I met the love of my life.

I soon married Benjamin Smith and as we continued to grow our family, it did not come without challenges. I remember buying groceries at McGowans Market for \$5 and coming home with at least 5 bags, can't say the same today. However, family is family and was a very important part of my life. When I owned and operated a little restaurant in San Pedro, that taught me how to shop and save, which is a good lesson to learn with six children. Everyday, was full of excitement with kids running around the house. My kids were everything. Between football and drill team practice, piano lessons, fishing trips and family gatherings, life was busy and grand! And, occasionally I added in several nieces and nephews to play with and help along the way. After several years of home health aide and nursing assistant., and after a few years at the VA hospital, I decided to go back to school to become a registered nurse, finally finished and began my 25 year career at King Drew Medical Center, loved every bit of my 12 hour shifts. During my retirement I became the resident nurse at home and for the neighborhood. Many neighbors would call and come by when things weren't quite right, and I would gladly meet their need. Serving and volunteering my time has always been a passion. I remember once after the birth of my last child, I wanted to go to Mexico and be a missionary and was packing to go, when I was reminded by my mother that I had six children and I needed to stay put!

In my spare time, I loved gardening, reading and yes you guessed it Las Vegas! I was often found on the patio, listening to Kenny Rogers (loved country music), the Gaithers or Mahalia Jackson, as I worked the garden. Also, I'd play Ray Charles' 'America The Beautiful' for the yearly block party on July 4th. How about just sitting on the patio enjoying the weather with a good book or magazine. And, let's remember Las Vegas, the days when Benny and I could just hop in the car and go, stay up two days just enjoying each other and having fun.

Being a believer, and having been a member of Caanan Church of God in Christ in Wilmington, California, the bible teaches you that life happens, and we learn to take the good with the bad and trust God every step of the way. Education is so important, read your bible and read a book! My Mother always told me, did you think you came here to stay? So, now my journey is over. I've lived a good life, one that was rewarding and blessed by God.

I was preceded in death my husband Ben, my three children, Benjamin Jr, Paul , Terri and a grandson, Deshawn. I leave to cherish some great memories, Benny (Gwen), Steven, Roland (Frances). My two daughters, Tonda (Mo-Dak) and Tracy. My brothers Eddie, Eugene and Jetho. My sisters Florence, Ruby and Naomi. My beautiful grandchildren, Paul II (Maracemi), Jonathon, Benjamin, Myles, Gennae, Ian, Tia, Frances, Navelle, Byron (Courtney), Kelli (LaMont), Phil (Dena), great grandchildren and a many many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.