



Jean S. Hale

July 1, 1943 - October 5, 2025

Jean S. Hale, 82, of Asheville, passed away peacefully on Sunday, October 5, 2025, at Silverbell Homestead in Fletcher, NC.

Born in Coweta, GA, Jean was the daughter of the late John Hall Sherrill, Jr. and Joe Lorraine Estes Sherrill. She is survived by her son, Michael S. Hale of Fletcher, NC and his spouse, Amanda K Hale; grandchildren Nealy Worthy of New York, NY, Davis Hale of Denton, TX, Ethan Hale of Asheville, and Luke Hale of Boone, NC; and great-grandson Silas Hale. She is also survived by her sisters, Rita Salter and Susan Sherrill, and her brother, John Hall Sherrill III.

Jean spent most of her childhood in Atmore, Alabama, where she graduated from Escambia County High School. Even then, she was known for her charm and enthusiasm—serving as Beta Club President, joining Glee and Latin Clubs, and being selected for Who's Who and Girl's State Beauty. Her yearbook description read "a combination of beauty, talent, and fun."

At the University of Alabama, Jean quickly realized that she preferred real people over pretense. She joined the top sorority on campus, decided it wasn't her crowd, and happily chose a different path. She married Rodney Hale, and together they settled in Auburn, AL, and later Atlanta, GA, where they raised their son, Michael.

In Tucker, GA, Jean's creative and generous spirit shone through. She served as "team mom" for countless teams, managed concessions at the Tucker Fields, edited the neighborhood newsletter Smoke Signals, and once crafted an elaborate George Washington costume, complete with a handmade cotton-ball wig, for her son's school play.

After 35 years of marriage, Jean began a new chapter that embodied her independence and warmth. She volunteered tirelessly, found joy in helping others, and poured her heart into buying and building cabins in Suches, GA. She loved nothing more than driving her big white Dodge Ram through the mountains, checking on construction, and befriending the folks who rented her cabins. When she sold them, it was to people who had become dear friends.

It was during this season that Jean met the love of her life, Jim Kauke. Together they shared twelve years of true companionship, laughter, and love. After his passing, she

wore her dragonfly necklace every day, a quiet tribute to the man who filled her heart. Jean was a kind spirit and a friend to all. She had a gift for seeing the person standing alone and making them feel like they'd just met their new best friend. She could host a formal dinner for 100 with grace and ease—but was just as happy in what she called a good “honky-tonk,” as she called them, restaurant, swapping stories over comfort food. Her practicality was legendary—when she found a T-shirt she liked at Walmart, she'd buy it in every color and declare it her uniform for the year. Yet she sprinkled whimsy throughout her life: cartoonish animal figurines in unexpected corners, and a faceless life-sized doll at the base of her stairs that was, unintentionally, delightfully eerie.

Jean was genuine, unpretentious, and deeply kind. She comforted strangers, championed friends, and extended her care across the world. A family friend's child in South Africa once called her their “fairy godmother” because, as he said, “she brought magic to our world.”

That magic was everywhere she went—from the day six-year-old Jean helped the Florida governor's wife cut the ribbon on the new Pensacola Beach Bridge (a project led by her grandfather J. H. Sherrill) to her final days, when she instigated a dance party at Silverbell. She truly lived by the words that once hung in her kitchen: “Dance like no one is watching.”

Jean Hale will be remembered for her generosity, humor, and light, the rare kind of person who made the world feel a little more beautiful just by being in it.

Her family will hold a celebration of life ceremony in the spring of 2026. For those wishing to honor her in other ways, please find time to help someone in need, just as she so often did.

Tribute Wall

AA

“ The family members who wrote this beautiful tribute to a dear friend certainly captured Jean's delightful spirit. The world has lost one of its earth angels, but Heaven has gained a very special one. Rest in Peach, my darling friend.

Aimee Bartel Allen - October 30, 2025 at 10:56 AM

AA

The above tribute has a mistake and I cannot change it. It should read, "Rest in Peace, my darling friend."

Aimee Bartel Allen - October 30, 2025 at 11:00 AM

KM

“ Mike, I'm so sorry to hear about your Mom's passing. She was very special to me. We developed a strong bond through all of our conversations and time spent together, and I had tremendous respect for her. I miss her wit, insight, and chuckle, and am honored to have been her friend. I hope you and Amanda are doing well under the circumstances, and hope to run into you some time.

Kevin Miller - October 16, 2025 at 07:51 PM

PN

I will never forget the times I spent with Jean. She was an amazing woman. She was a treasure to her family and especially to me. I will miss her but will always have a special place in my heart. Condolences to her family and friends. With love ,Patty

Patricia Nakielski - October 19, 2025 at 05:53 PM