



Mrs. Rita Joyce Manchester

April 14, 1944 - April 20, 2025

Rita Joyce Manchester, 81, of DeWitt, Arkansas, passed away peacefully on April 20, 2025, at DeWitt City Nursing Home. Born on April 14, 1944, to Claude and Carmen Adams, Rita spent her life rooted in the community that shaped her and which she, in turn, helped shape through a lifetime of service.

Rita was preceded in death by her parents, Claude and Carmen Adams of DeWitt; her husband, Doug Manchester; her son, Kirk Smith; her sister, Danna Jo Richter; and her nephews, Shane Adams and Craig Richter. Their memories remained close to her heart throughout her life.

She is survived by her brothers, Billy Claude Adams (Carolyn) of Heber Springs and Russell Adams (Cathy) of DeWitt; her grandson, Noah Smith and Libby Nash (Drake and Lilly) of Stuttgart; her stepdaughter, Lila McKewen, along with Lila's sons Layton and Cread; and her devoted friend Harley Gill, who brought her much joy and companionship in her later years.

Rita's professional life was a testament to her dedication and work ethic. Whether helping customers at her family's business, Adams Grocery, supporting local families through the Arkansas County Extension Office, working within the Arkansas County Detention Center, or assisting clients at Arkansas County Bank, Rita brought integrity, compassion, and a deep sense of responsibility to every role. Her ability to connect with people and make them feel seen and valued made her a respected presence wherever she worked.

A woman of deep and abiding faith, she was a familiar and beloved face in her church. She was known for sharing the gospel with conviction and humility and was always quick to lend a hand, offer a prayer, or simply show up when someone needed her. Her faith wasn't just something she spoke about—it was something she lived, daily, with quiet strength.

Visitation will be held Tuesday, April 22, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at Essex Funeral Home. Funeral services will follow on Wednesday, April 23, at 10:00 a.m. at First Baptist Church in DeWitt, Arkansas.

Memorials may be made to Operation Christmas Child, c/o First Baptist Church, 322 W. 1st St., DeWitt, AR 72042 or Romanian Missions, c/o Colleen Benthall, Southern Bancorp, P.O. Box 511, DeWitt, AR 72042.

Cemetery Details

Cedarcrest Memorial Gardens

Hwy 1
DeWitt, AR 72042

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 22. 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Essex Funeral Home
1405 South Grandview
DeWitt, AR 72042
(870) 946-3104
<https://www.essexfuneralhome.com>

Service

APR 23. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of DeWitt
DeWitt, AR

Tribute Wall

RG

“ So thankful God brought us to DeWitt so Rita could be a special part of our life. We had the privilege of renting a house behind her home. The first morning we were there she brought us a breakfast casserole. Her smile always made us feel special. She loved deeply and gave completely. We will miss her. We didn't know Rita had passed. So sorry we didn't get to attend her service,

Randy and Linda Gatling

Randy Gatling - May 01, 2025 at 02:11 PM

EH

“ Rita was such a sweet lady, even when not feeling her best. I loved our visits, which were few and far between. Prayers for Noah, the light of her life, and all her family!! ❤️❤️🙏🙏
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Ester Poston Hageman - April 23, 2025 at 06:20 PM

SD

“ Sue Davis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rita Joyce Manchester



Sue Davis - April 23, 2025 at 12:52 PM

GH

“ *Mrs Rita was very caring and the sweetest lady..*



Gaye Hopkins - April 22, 2025 at 07:35 PM

CC

“ *Carter and I are so sorry to learn of Rita's passing. She was so nice and kind we will always remember her. Carla and Carter Coleman*

carla Coleman - April 22, 2025 at 06:08 PM

MM

“ *Monte And Anna Marie McKewen lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rita Joyce Manchester*



Monte and Anna Marie McKewen - April 22, 2025 at 05:36 PM