



## Vera Pickens

September 3, 1952 - January 29, 2026

Vera Pickens, affectionately known as “Miss V,” was known for her bold personality, jazzy spirit, and unmistakable style. She was a flamboyant yet classy woman who carried herself with poise and confidence, always dressed to impress and never afraid to stand out. Miss V had the most beautiful smile and never met a stranger.

When she entered a room, her presence naturally commanded attention, and when she spoke, she spoke with confidence. She was direct, honest, and unapologetically herself, never tolerating anything less than respect. Because of this, she was highly respected and deeply admired by all who knew her.

She had a unique flair all her own and a personality that was truly one of a kind. Her legacy is unforgettable. She will be missed immensely and remembered forever.

Vera Pickens was born on September 3, 1952, in Chicago, Illinois, to the late Mr. Frederick Wesley and Mrs. Roberta Wesley. She attended Parkman Elementary School and later Simeon High School.

In 1969, Vera married Joseph Edward Pickens, and they remained married until his untimely and tragic passing in September 1974.

Vera enjoyed shopping, traveling, decorating her home, and spending time with family and those closest to her. She leaves to cherish her memory, four adult children, Mrs. Cynthia Rhodes (Scott) of Champaign, IL, Antwan D. Riley Sr. of Lima, Ohio, Kenny Pickens of Lima, Ohio and Mrs. Kelly Pickens (Robert) of Chicago, IL; twelve grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, nieces, great-nieces, nephews, great-nephews, a sister-in-law, and the love of her life, Mr. Warren Byrd.

# Cemetery Details

## Mound Grove Cemetery

1000 N. Greenwood  
Kankakee, IL

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB 14. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Lax Mortuary  
187 S. Greenwood Avenue  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
(815) 935-0090  
laxmortuary@laxmortuary.com  
<http://laxmortuary.com/>

## Service

FEB 14. 10:00 AM (CT)

Lax Mortuary  
187 S. Greenwood Avenue  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
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# Tribute Wall



“ JOANN FORD-BOX lit a candle in memory of  
Vera Pickens



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**JOANN FORD-BOX** - February 10 at 06:08 PM

MR

“As a Tribute to the Life of My Phenomenal, Unforgettable Mother  
My mother and I did not share the kind of relationship people expect  
or easily understand.

*It was not wrapped in perfection or softness,  
but it was rooted in truth, strength, and an unspoken bond  
that ran deeper than words could ever explain.*

*My mother was my SHERO,  
even though she never knew she was.*

*From the time I was a little girl,  
I watched her.*

*I studied her.*

*I admired her.*

*And I told her, again and again,*

*“When I grow up, I’m going to be just like you.”*

*I wanted to dress like her.*

*Walk like her.*

*Wear my shoes the way she did.*

*Carry myself the way she carried herself.*

*I watched how hard she worked,  
how she showed up every day with strength,  
how she refused to be broken, bent, or silenced by the world.*

*She taught us, without ever sitting us down,  
that hard work was not optional  
and self-respect was non-negotiable.*

*My mother was a strong, jazzy lady.*

*She had a walk you could recognize from across the room,  
a style that turned heads,*

*and a presence that announced itself before she ever spoke.*

*When she laughed, the room felt warmer.*

*When she smiled, everything felt lighter.*

*When she entered a space, you knew Vera was there.*

*She raised us to stand our ground.*

*To stand for what was right.*

*To never allow anyone to tell us what we could not do.*

*She instilled in us a strength that did not ask for permission  
and a confidence that did not require approval.*

*I will miss calling her phone  
and hearing her say my name.  
I will miss her voice saying,  
“Hey Renee... girl, you must gonna live a long time.  
I was just thinking about you,”  
or,  
“I was just getting ready to call you.”  
Those words felt like home.  
I am a full-grown woman,  
with adult children and adult grandchildren,  
yet losing my mother has reduced me to a little bitty girl  
standing in a world that suddenly feels too big,  
too quiet,  
and too unfamiliar without her.  
I don't even have to see my mother to know she is near.  
I can smell her perfume  
and instantly feel her presence.  
She wore one particular scent,  
and anyone who knew her knew exactly what it meant.  
If you smelled it, you looked around,  
because either Vera was somewhere nearby  
or Vera had just been there.  
That is how deeply she remains with us.  
My love for my mother has ZERO limits,  
ZERO conditions,  
and ZERO expiration.  
Time cannot touch it.  
Death cannot diminish it.  
And nothing will ever take her place.  
I will love my mother until the end of time.  
I carry her in my strength.  
I honor her in my walk.  
I feel her in my spirit.  
And I will forever be grateful  
that God chose Vera  
to be my mother.  
I will love you forever, your daughter, Renee.*

**Mrs. Cynthia Rhodes** - February 10 at 01:58 PM

VJ

*That was certainly My Buddy, I was the Other Ms. V to her...R.I.P. My Chicago Friend 🍷🍷🍷🍷*

**Violet Jackson** - March 22 at 06:47 PM