



Wilda Ward

June 17, 1938 - May 28, 2026

Wilda Faye “Bug” Ward, 87, died Thursday, May 28, 2026, at Mountain Meadows Senior Living in Leavenworth, surrounded by her three children.

She was born in Sevierville, TN, on June 17, 1938, to Oliver and Lona (Barnes) Rayfield. At the age of 12, the family moved from the Smoky Mountains to the upper Wenatchee Valley. They settled in Peshastin, where Wilda graduated from Peshastin High School in 1956. Upon graduation, she began working at Cascade General Hospital as a nurse’s aide, where she met, attended to, and fell in love with a young patient, Jim Ward, whom she married in 1961.

Wilda and Jim ultimately settled in Leavenworth and spent the ensuing years there, where they grew their family and committed themselves to their hometown, as Leavenworth blossomed into the Bavarian Village. They created the first ambulance and emergency dispatch system in the upper valley, operated the Edelweiss hotel and restaurant alongside friends Jim and Judy Gottschalk, and contributed to the community in a variety of other ways. But above all other activities and business ventures, Wilda and Jim dedicated themselves to serving families as founders and owner/operators of Ward’s Funeral Chapel, a passion they shared for 38 years. After Jim’s passing in 2008, Wilda, with professional assistance from long-time family friend and provider, Dan Scott, continued to serve families for another 10 years.

Wilda is survived by her three children: Jim, Jr. (Missy) Ward, Lona (Doug) Parton, and Denise Ward; six grandchildren: Kellen (Sarah) Parton, Evan (Leah) Parton, Noelle (Aidan) Swenson, Juliea (Shawn) Smith, Caroline (Daniel) Fitzgerald, and Jesse (Callie) Ward; and 15 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brother, John (Hazel) Rayfield, and aunt Myrtle Floyd. She was preceded in death by her parents, Oliver and Lona Rayfield; husband, Jim Ward, Sr.; sisters Avis Higginbotham, Marie Hurst, Lillie Mae Franklin, and Doris Nierman; and brother, Curtis Rayfield.

Wilda was a resident of Mountain Meadows Senior Living for the last four years, where she was a fixture in the lobby, performing duties as unofficial greeter and occasional bouncer.

Our gratitude to the entire staff of Mountain Meadows for their endless professionalism and compassion towards Bug can never be overstated.

Visitation will be held on Friday, June 12, 2026, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Chapel of the Valley, 378 Eastmont Ave., East Wenatchee, WA.

A funeral service celebrating the life of Wilda F. Ward will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 11 a.m., at the Leavenworth Church of the Nazarene, 111 Ski Hill Drive, Leavenworth, WA, followed immediately by a luncheon reception at the church.

Memorial contributions may be made to Mountain Meadows Senior Living, 320 Park Ave., Leavenworth, WA 98826.

Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee, WA, is in charge of the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Mountain View Cemetery

12874 Old Leavenworth Cemetery Rd.
Leavenworth, WA 98826

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN 12. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Chapel of the Valley
378 Eastmont Ave.
East Wenatchee, WA 98802
(509) 884-3561
info@chapelofthevalleyncw.com

Funeral Service

JUN 13. 11:00 AM (PT)

Leavenworth Church of Nazarene
111 Ski Hill Drive
Leavenworth, WA 98826

Followed immediately by a luncheon reception at the church. Private interment at a later date.