



Josephine Ben Schoonover

July 2, 1937 - May 22, 2025

Josephine “Jo” (Ben) Schoonover, 87, of Muskogee, Oklahoma, passed away on Thursday, May 22, 2025. Born on July 2, 1937, to Olin and Neva Isaac Ben in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Jo lived a life filled with love, service, and dedication.

Jo graduated from Pearl River High School in Mississippi at the age of 17. She then attended Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas, before obtaining her stenographic certification from the OSU School of Technical Training on August 12, 1960, in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. During her time at the school, she was honored as the third runner-up in Miss Indian America held in Sheridan, Wyoming. Growing up, Jo was an athlete who played basketball and softball.

On January 26, 1962, Jo married the love of her life, Eldon Lewis Schoonover, in Ponca City. Together, they built a life rooted in faith and community service. Jo worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for over 30 years as an administrative assistant, retiring in 1994. Upon moving to Muskogee in 1961, Jo and Eldon became active members of Meadowbrook Baptist Church for 20 years, where Jo served as a youth worker and the Falls Creek camp cook and sponsor. They later attended Grandview Baptist Church for 12 years, continuing her work as a youth worker and camp cook and sponsor. For about 33 years, they were members of Muskogee First Baptist Church, where Jo’s culinary talents were renowned. She was frequently asked to cook her famous Indian Tacos at camp, driving down on Wednesday mornings, cooking all day,

and returning home in the evenings.

Jo's "Indian Tacos" were beloved by her family and community. She took great joy in making them for anyone who asked, especially for schools during the Oklahoma Land Run event at Hilldale Elementary, where first graders would dress up as Native Americans and watch from the side. Jo's cooking extended to her home church and other churches throughout Oklahoma. She even made them for the people who prepared her taxes. Her Indian Tacos were so famous she was asked by the Muskogee Shriners to make them at their national Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was an all-expense paid trip for one meal.

Jo loved to travel, enjoyed fishing, and was part of a bowling league in Muskogee. An avid OU fan, she and Eldon were season ticket holders for over 45 years. They, along with their children, enjoyed traveling to bowl games to support their team.

Jo's life was a testament to her unwavering spirit, generosity, and dedication to her community. Her memory will be cherished by all who knew her.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Olin and Neva Ben sisters, Nannie Mae Ortiz, Annie Laura Alex, and Mattie Lou Ben; brother, Harrison Ben.

Jo is survived by her loving husband, Eldon Schoonover; her son, Jeffrey Schoonover; and her daughter, Neva Schoonover; and many other family members and friends.

A celebration of Jo's life will be 10AM, Thursday, May 29, 2025 at Muskogee First Baptist Church with Pastor Kevin Chartney officiating.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Park Cemetery

7600 Old Taft Rd.
Muskogee, OK 74401

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

CORNERSTONE FUNERAL HOME
1830 N York St
MUSKOGEE, OK 74403

Family to greet friends

MAY 28. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

CORNERSTONE FUNERAL HOME
1830 N York St
MUSKOGEE, OK 74403

Service

MAY 29. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church Muskogee
111 S. 7th Street
Muskogee, OK 74401

Tribute Wall



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Josephine Ben Schoonover.*



May 28, 2025 at 12:12 PM



“ *Eldon, I am saddened to hear about your wife. May god watch over you and the family.*

Cris Ford - May 27, 2025 at 12:59 PM



“ *From the Miller family - Terry and Paula purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Josephine Ben Schoonover.*



From the Miller family - Terry and Paula - May 27, 2025 at 10:57 AM



“ *From the Miller family - Terry and Paula planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Josephine Ben Schoonover.*

From the Miller family - Terry and Paula - May 27, 2025 at 10:57 AM

BC

“ I remember Jo from our years at Meadowbrook Baptist Church and especially from 1966 & 1967 Falls Creek church camp trips. She was always so sweet and was wonderful counselor to a bunch of rowdy, boy crazy girls! I'm so sorry, Eldon for the loss of your sweetheart. My condolences to you and your children. Becki Cato

Becki Cato - May 26, 2025 at 08:48 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Josephine Ben Schoonover.



May 26, 2025 at 08:37 PM

DD

“ So sorry to learn of your wife's passing; prayers of comfort . VHA family



Dee Dunn - May 26, 2025 at 01:09 PM



“ 63 files added to the album Life Tributes



Cornerstone Funeral Home and Crematory - May 26, 2025 at 12:54 PM