



Jean E. Guiffre

JUL 15, 1942 - JAN 27, 2026



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Jean E. Guiffré (née Fritter) was born on July 15, 1942 in Opal, VA, and passed away on January 27, 2026, at the age of 83, at her home in Baden, MD, where she raised her family and built a life defined by love, service, and strength. She was the daughter of Anna Mary Hays.

Jean grew up in Riverdale, MD, attended Bladensburg High School, and at 16, married Ben Guiffré. Together they built a home in the country where generations gathered. From an early age, she carried a strong sense of independence and care for others, qualities that would define her life. She raised four children and a niece and informally fostered countless others. Jean was an extraordinary mother who devoted herself to raising her children with steadfast love, protection, and resolve. She quietly counseled scores of friends and family members while preparing meals in the kitchen or sitting outside on the porch with a glass of iced tea.

In her earlier years, Jean worked as a detective, a role well-suited to her sharp instincts, clarity of thought, and strength of character. Working alongside Ben as a private investigator while renovating their old farmhouse, creating costumes for community plays, and feeding any neighbor who walked in the door, Jean cooked, cleaned, canned, sewed, and put up drywall with the best of them!

Jean's path took an unexpected turn when she visited her mother in a senior building and discovered her mom's cupboards were bare. Age and illness had limited her mother's mobility and ability to shop for groceries. Jean ended up shopping for her mother and then for her mother's neighbors, and then in 1982, recognizing a broader need, she founded and became executive director of Top Banana Home-Delivered Groceries. With the invaluable support of the "Top Banana Bunch" – a group of dedicated staff, volunteers, and Board members – she served thousands of residents of Prince George's and Montgomery counties and across the DC metropolitan area, for more than 33 years.



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For her efforts, Jean was named a Washingtonian of the Year and received a Governors Citation for having “nutrition” added as a critical need for seniors in state programs. Top Banana was twice named one of the area’s “best small charities” by the selective Catalogue for Philanthropy.

Jean saw a simple but powerful need and figured out how to meet it with grit and determination. Deliveries were made to seniors and homebound residents with a genuine human connection, an extension of her respect for the human family. Her work helped ensure that countless individuals were able to live with greater dignity and independence. A quintessential pragmatist, Jean turned what began as a practical solution into a widely recognized service that touched countless lives and quietly changed what community-based care could look like, long before similar services became common.

On a personal level, Jean was known for her warmth, generosity, empathy, and natural ability to make others feel welcome and understood. She was a great listener. She was both tough and tender, a fighter to her core, and a model of strength for her grandchildren, whom she showed that it was possible to be resilient and compassionate at the same time. She was known for her indomitable spirit. Even in the face of serious health challenges, she remained grateful, kind, strong, loving, and unyielding.

The legacy Jean spoke about wanting to leave her family and community was for them to believe in the power of passion: If you recognize something that needs to be done, consider the odds and then let the power of passion be the fuel that drives you to success. Grammy did it herself time and again – with love and a smile.

Jean is survived by her brother Jack (Beverlee); her children Michael, Suzette, Christina, Guy (Daley), and “bonus daughter” Melanie (Brian); 10 grandchildren: Heather (Du), Laurie, Nick (Crissy), Austin, Spencer, Noah (Jenna), Elisabeth, Caleb, Cassie, and Caty; 10 great-grandchildren: Jasmyn, Jayson, Natalie, Arthur, Ben, Quinn, Mehrin, Marcus, Giovanna, and Luka; extended family members Penny and Hector; numerous nieces and nephews; and her surrogate family Robbie, Donna, Nicole (Allan), Robbie (Danni), Beau, Charleigh, Tucker, and Evelyn. She was preceded in death by her mother, and her siblings Nancy and Bobby.

Join us on April 30, 2026 for a celebration of Jean’s remarkable life. (Please request details at info@11countrymiles.com.)



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The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Jean's caregivers, especially Rita and Ebere of Hope Home Care in Upper Marlboro.

Memorial contributions may be made in Jean's name to your local food bank or non-profit serving seniors.



Events

Jean E. Guiffre

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Celebration of Life Service

 **Thursday**, April 30, 2026

 **Email info@11countrysmiles.com for details**
MD



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jean by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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