



## Valerie Counts

January 10, 1964 - June 2, 2023

Valerie Michele Johnson Counts, dearly beloved wife of Nathaniel Dwayne Counts, and eldest daughter of Corine Jenkins Johnson and the late James Edward Johnson Sr., was a native of Jesup, Wayne County, Georgia. From the onset of her life, January 10, 1964, until her final day on earth, June 2, 2023, she filled hearts, rooms, places, and spaces with an abundance of joy and enormous radiance.

As a child, Val accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior and was baptized at Bennett Union Baptist Church in Jesup, Georgia in the early 1970s. During this formative season of life, she learned to serve the Lord with gladness, developed a personal relationship with God, and committed to doing the work of the Lord while it was yet day. Nurtured as a leader by her father, mother, and the village of Wayne County, Valerie excelled academically in school and engaged socially throughout the community in church as well as various civic organizations via achievements of scholastic honor, the designation of Who's Who Amongst American High School students, and membership in the Beta Club, Future Business Leaders of America, the yearbook staff, journalism club, officer in the Student Government Association, contestant for Miss Sweet Heart, attendant on the homecoming court, and student leader in the Wayne County Youth Branch of the NAACP.

Upon graduating high school with honors in 1982, Valerie attended the University of Georgia in Athens where she majored in Journalism, gained a sea of friends, and partied non-stop like a Rock Star lol when she could. Throughout her matriculation in college, she remained focused and determined to succeed in anything and everything that she aspired to do and/or become. However, unbeknownst to her parents at the time, Val also set her mind, body, soul, and vehicle on the road to Atlanta when she was supposed to be in Athens studying and was somewhat successful in concealing her trips until her father began routinely checking the mileage on her vehicle and discovered the "distant" adventures she had been undertaking. lol As noted in the lyrics of the song by Sade', Val was simply a "smooth operator" who was determined to make "Hotlanta", HER LANTA! In 1986, Valerie graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Journalism and obtained the distinction of becoming the first African-American UGA graduate from Wayne County, Georgia.

After graduating college, Val quickly lol moved to Atlanta to embark upon a remarkable life and an extraordinary 36-year career with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). On February 8, 1987, she began her initial assignment with the IRS. Then, along an awesome journey there, she became a dedicated and valuable employee who worked in several areas and held multiple positions throughout her career. In March 2011, she successfully completed the Senior Manager Readiness Program. After which, Campus Collection Atlanta selected her as Operations Manager for Automated Collection Systems (ACS) and Automated Collections Support Systems (ACSS). After holding these leadership posts for a significant number of years, Val transitioned to Senior Manager of Compliance Service Collection Operations (CSCO) before returning to ACS in September of 2020. As Senior Manager, Valerie supervised, managed, and trained as many as 250 employees, worked

closely with leaders in program development, and assisted the directorate as the Interim Planning and Analysis Chief. Year after year, she advanced to various levels, roles, and responsibilities in senior management which built a remarkable career in government that cap stoned at 36 years.

An avid UGA and Atlanta Falcons fan, Val was a seasonal ticket holder for over 25 years and was the ultimate tailgater with the greatest of grilled delights. Without question, she enjoyed the love of sports so much that she and her future husband traveled to London, England in 2014 to attend and support the Falcons who lost in a major upset to the Detroit Lions. Whether in defeat or victory, Valerie/Lady V was loyal just the same. If there was a game to be held or a party to be had, Valerie was indeed at the center of making things work. She was also a wine connoisseur who held membership in a group called the Soulful Sipsters and basked in every opportunity to fellowship with friends and family. Reading great books, volunteering to feed the hungry, enjoying delicious foods of all sorts, preparing for holiday gatherings, and partaking in a medley of marvelous libations were the hallmark of her hobbies and her well-lived life.

In addition to her sports spectatorship and loyalties, Val really, really loved to travel. From her road trip ventures with her girlfriends to her many international cruises, flights, and excursions, Mrs. Valerie Johnson Counts was to be "counted in" at all times. Some of her trips abroad included Costa Rica, Panama, Hawaii, Jamaica, Aruba, Dominican Republic, Cancun, Turks and Caicos, London, Paris, Curacao, Columbia, St. Thomas - Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Mexico City, and many other wonderful locations. Val knew how to embrace life to the fullest and how to share her love with others who were not as fortunate or incredibly blessed as she. That is actually one of the greatest attributes that she possessed. Throughout her life, Valerie understood the

importance of sharing her love, resources, time, talents, and gifts with others and she did so without reservation.

In 2013, Val was blessed to meet her optimal friend, confidant, and the love of her life, Nathaniel "Nate" Dwayne Counts of Charleston, South Carolina. Forever full of surprises, she presented him to her family and friends as her birthday gift to herself during her 50th birthday celebration in 2014. From this powerful, wonderful, and loving bond, an amazing courtship blossomed, and while on vacation in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in 2017, Nate sealed the deal on a spectacular life by proposing to Valerie at The Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, to signify that her love had lifted him higher. Soon thereafter, Val orchestrated an incredible destination wedding in Aruba with close family and friends.

There is no doubt, Val was well-loved, lived life abundantly, praised God consistently, and will be missed incredibly. To have her as wife, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, cousin, classmate, close neighbor, or friend, was to experience the essence of unconditional love.

Now that GOD has spoken, the church indeed must say AMEN!

Valerie Counts was preceded in death by her father, James E. Johnson Sr., oldest brother, Gary Lavon Johnson, and older brother, James Edward Johnson Jr. She leaves to cherish her memory and legacy the following persons and loved ones:

Her husband: Nate Dwayne Counts, 3 step-children: Mahogani, Christopher, and Jamya Counts, her mother: Corine J. Johnson, her sisters: Latonya Marie Johnson-Murphy and Katonya Olivia Johnson, her brother: Adair Tyrone Johnson, her sister in law: Adlene Johnson, her uncle: Rosby (Debbie) Lee, her aunt: Arlene (Jimmy) Cotton, special brother-cousin Granville (Kathy) Scott, her nieces: Quintina Johnson, Lydia Cox, Christan Johnson, Jamie

Daniels, and Chastity Murphy. her nephews: Gary Johnson Jr, Jeremiah Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Daniel Johnson, and Aamir Walker along with a host of great nieces, great nephews, many relatives, life-long friends, colleagues, and associates.

#### Viewing & Funeral Information:

Viewing will take place Friday, June 9th, 2023 from 6 -8 pm. at

Gregory Levett & Sons Funeral Homes  
4347 Flat Shoals Parkway  
Decatur, Georgia 30034

Funeral services will take place Saturday, June 10, 2023 at 12 noon at

Celebration of Life Services for Valerie Counts will be held on Saturday, June 10, 2023 at 12:00 PM. These services will be recorded and streamed live. If the event is interrupted at any time due to technical issues, the entire event will be uploaded and available to view later in the day. Please copy and paste the link to share, or simply click on the link to view the event.

<https://vimeo.com/829117683>

New Birth Missionary Baptist Church  
6400 Woodrow Road  
Stonecrest, GA 30038

Also note, the final viewing will take place 11 a.m. - 12 noon (1 hour prior to the start of service). The repast will take place immediately following the service and before the interment.

For those who cannot travel to Valerie Johnson Count's homegoing celebration in Atlanta, please note that the Wayne County community live stream viewing of the service in Jesup and the signing of the bereavement registry will take place at 12 noon on June 10th at

Community Chapel Funeral Home  
2524 U.S. 341  
Jesup, Georgia 31545

Service entrusted to Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory-  
South DeKalb Chapel 404.241.5656

# Cemetery Details

## Kennedy Memorial Gardens

2500 River Road  
ELLENWOOD, Ga

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 9. 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

South DeKalb Chapel  
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy.  
Decatur, GA 30034  
(404) 241-5656  
info@levettfuneralhome.com

## Family Hour

JUN 9. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

South DeKalb Chapel  
4347 Flat Shoals Pkwy.  
Decatur, GA 30034  
(404) 241-5656  
info@levettfuneralhome.com

# Tribute Wall



“ Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory created a Webcast in memory of Valerie Counts



Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. - June 07, 2023 at 10:19 AM

AA

*My deepest condolences and prayer of peace and comfort to the Johnson-Counts family and friends. Val was a pleasure to work with and she always wore a smile. She will be deeply missed.*

Aishadia Alexander - June 10, 2023 at 09:02 AM

BT

*Prayers and comfort for our family. 🙏❤️ Cousin Valerie will always be in our hearts. ❤️ Rest in Heavenly Peace Val 🌹🕊️❤️🌹🕯️*

Barbara Thomas - June 10, 2023 at 02:18 PM

PH

*My condolences and pryer to Johnson -counts family it was a pleasure to have known you Val 🙏🌸*

pamela henderson - June 10, 2023 at 03:50 PM

DS

*Prayers and comfort to the family of my sweet classmate.*

Donna Anderson Solomon - June 11, 2023 at 06:19 PM

RL

“ Hi, I only knew Valerie through a single phone conversation. I was in desperate need of assistance from the IRS, and need help setting up a payment plan in April/May of 2022. I called the IRS 23 times over the course of 10 days. Each time I was on hold for about an hour and the call disconnected. I had a deadline to establish my repayment plan. Had I not met that deadline, I was going to be unable to obtain a mortgage for a new home. I had almost lost hope when I called one last time, and Valerie answered. She immediately said "Oh, I can do that for you right now". Literally every other person I spoke to either did not know how, or said they knew how, but did it wrong. At one point our call dropped, and my heart sank, but 2 mionutes later my phone rang and it was Valerie, calling me back. She was indeed very professional and yet so very sweet. I felt in my heart that it was a God-arranged appointment. I'm very sorry for your loss, but it appears she is with our Lord and our Saviour and our Holy Spirit. Praise Jesus!

Robert Lewis - September 06, 2023 at 03:17 PM

HO

“ Hilda Onwuma-Ivbaze lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Hilda Onwuma-Ivbaze - July 23, 2023 at 01:00 AM

JJ

“ Julia Johnson lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Julia Johnson - June 12, 2023 at 11:29 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 10, 2023 at 09:21 AM



“ *Carmen Goforth lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



---

**Carmen Goforth** - June 10, 2023 at 09:16 AM



“ *Johnita Weaver lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



---

**Johnita Weaver** - June 10, 2023 at 08:18 AM



“ *Stephanie Allen lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



---

**Stephanie Allen** - June 10, 2023 at 06:19 AM

SA

“ Stephanie Allen lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Stephanie Allen - June 10, 2023 at 06:04 AM

BT

“ Valerie lived life to the fullest and enjoyed every bit of it. She was a dedicated Senior Manager and worked diligently to durians goals while uplifting and empowering her staff. She will truly be missed. Beverly Thomas, Retired IRS Executive and Valerie’s Campus Director from 2017-2018

Beverly Thomas - June 09, 2023 at 10:29 PM

KF

“ Kimberly Freeman lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Kimberly Freeman - June 09, 2023 at 09:53 PM

PS

“ Patrice Strong lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Patrice Strong - June 09, 2023 at 09:44 PM

CB

“ Cynthia Bellamy lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Cynthia Bellamy - June 09, 2023 at 08:59 PM

PH

“ Pamela Henderson lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



pamela henderson - June 09, 2023 at 07:00 PM

DB

“ Valerie brought light and laughter into every room she entered. One of my most favorite people that I went to high school and UGA with. I will miss my friend. Praying for peace for the family.

David Bland - June 09, 2023 at 06:39 PM

SR

“ Stella Ratcliff-Jaudon lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



Stella Ratcliff-Jaudon - June 09, 2023 at 05:18 PM

FC

“ *FRED CLIFTON lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



FRED CLIFTON - June 09, 2023 at 04:54 PM

FC

*WILL MISS OUR TALKS ABOUT THEM BULLDOGS AND DIRTY BIRDS REST IN PEACE AND RISE UP!!!!*

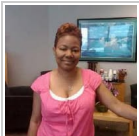
FRED CLIFTON - June 09, 2023 at 04:55 PM

SR

“ *Condolences to the family of the late Valerie Counts and her IRS family. When I served as NTEU Chapter 284 President, Valerie was a fair and professional manager. She insured that she followed the Union contract and stayed in constant communication with me. I always appreciated her political savvy and servant leadership qualities. Managers like Valerie don't come along a lot. I am happy I had the opportunity to work with her. Rest In Peace.*



Shenetha Releford-Dickey - June 09, 2023 at 04:28 PM



“ *Tammy Sims lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Tammy Sims - June 09, 2023 at 04:08 PM

WJ

“Mrs. Counts is what I always called you. Even when you told me in your laid back voice, “you can call me Val or Valarie”. I told you it was not meant to offend her it was just a respect thing on my part” and you said okay. From that point on when we greeted each other it was Mrs. Counts and Mrs. Jackson.

*I am sure like so many others I am forever grateful for all the opportunities you provided me in advancing my career. You didn't just lead me to the challenges but you provided support and guidance every step of the way.*

*Thank you for the opportunities. Thank you for the guidance and support. You will truly be missed “Mrs. Counts”.*

*2 Timothy 4:7*

*“You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you have kept the faith.”*

---

**Wanchella Jackson** - June 09, 2023 at 12:50 PM

CP

“I met Mrs. Valerie as a contact representative in ACS. I am so thankful she pushed and saw something in me as she encouraged and cheered me on to stepping and moving forward into management. Mrs. Valerie provided me with an opportunity that I will forever be grateful for. I will miss her and thank you again Valerie.

---

**Candice P** - June 09, 2023 at 11:53 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 09, 2023 at 09:03 AM



“ *When I first moved to Atlanta, starting working at IDRS 35 yrs ago, Valerie became friend with my cousin and I. We shared some good times together. I am sorry that I lost a friend. My heart is very heavy*



---

**Debra Walker-Lewis** - June 08, 2023 at 06:33 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 08, 2023 at 05:01 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 08, 2023 at 03:24 PM

SH

“ *My Friend...this is one of the hardest Good-byes for me. I'm trying to piece this together by leaning on my Faith. My heart says too soon but my compassion for you says it wasn't my call. Lord give us all comfort. You are the shiny thread in my fabric....Fly High...please stop by time to time to check on us....I'll be watching the clouds!!!*

Shirl - June 08, 2023 at 01:44 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



June 08, 2023 at 01:27 PM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



June 08, 2023 at 10:11 AM

NC

“ Valerie was a classy lady that exhibited professionalism and great leadership in the Examination Department and it allowed her upward mobility within the agency. I was so proud to see her excel. To her family, loss is not easy as I have suffered loss too. Recalling great memories will help you. May God bless, comfort and heal the heart of her husband, every family member, friend, and co-worker.



---

**Natasha A. Carter** - June 08, 2023 at 10:04 AM

AM

“ Anita Mitchell lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts



---

**Anita Mitchell** - June 08, 2023 at 08:03 AM

TF

“ The Veronica Blount Memorial Foundation purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Valerie Counts.



---

**The Veronica Blount Memorial Foundation** - June 07, 2023 at 07:38 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.* ”



---

June 07, 2023 at 06:25 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.* ”



---

June 07, 2023 at 06:07 PM

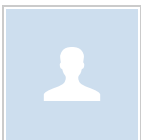


“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.* ”



---

June 07, 2023 at 02:15 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.* ”



---

June 07, 2023 at 02:06 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 07, 2023 at 08:49 AM



“ *I met Valerie in 2010 during our Senior Management Readiness Program training. Valerie, I and a couple of other students hit it off and hung out after class. Valerie was very friendly and funny. I would also see her at tailgates of the Falcons game. She will be missed.*

---

**Reggie Grimes** - June 07, 2023 at 08:36 AM

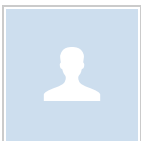


“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 07, 2023 at 06:47 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Valerie Counts.*

---

June 07, 2023 at 06:47 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 06, 2023 at 11:28 PM



“ *Dianne & Luke, Kaye-Kaye & Moses purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

**Dianne & Luke, Kaye-Kaye & Moses** - June 06, 2023 at 09:25 PM



“ *Dianne & Luke, Kaye-Kaye & Moses planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Valerie Counts.*

---

**Dianne & Luke, Kaye-Kaye & Moses** - June 06, 2023 at 09:25 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Valerie Counts.*



---

June 06, 2023 at 07:44 PM

FD

“ *Floria Davis lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Floria Davis - June 06, 2023 at 06:51 PM

SH

“ *I love you VJC! My beloved sister!!! How I will miss you 🥺*

Siaundra Hampton - June 06, 2023 at 05:33 PM

SW

“ *Sharon J. Worthy lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Sharon J. Worthy - June 06, 2023 at 04:12 PM

SW

*I've worked with Valerie for several years and always enjoyed the time we spent together and the laughter. She was always regaling me with "little known" facts. My condolences to Nate and her family.*

Sharon J. Worthy - June 06, 2023 at 04:17 PM

GB

“ *Gwendolyn Brown lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Gwendolyn Brown - June 06, 2023 at 02:48 PM

GB

*Although , I've only known Valerie for a short/long time, she was a joy for me & my husband to be around. She will be sadly missed. Condolences to Nate and the rest of her family.*

**Gwendolyn Brown** - June 06, 2023 at 02:55 PM

JC

“ *James Crosby lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



**James Crosby** - June 06, 2023 at 02:41 PM

PS

“ *Although we only knew each other for a short time, Val was a joy to be around. Her love for her family and football was evident and her smile lit up the room. My deepest condolences to her husband and all of her loved ones. We are all blessed to gain another angel we know by name.*



**Patrice B Smith** - June 06, 2023 at 02:27 PM

BL

“ *My deepest condolences. Blythe Lawrence*



**Blythe Lawrence** - June 06, 2023 at 01:41 PM

SG

“ *Heavenly Blessings in memory of a person with very positive spirit.*

Steve George - June 06, 2023 at 11:20 AM

GS

“ *Gina Swanson lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Gina Swanson - June 06, 2023 at 11:20 AM

GS

*Sending prayers of comfort and peace to Valerie's family and friends. Valerie was a co-worker for many years and we became friends outside of the workplace. I'll truly miss her and our heartfelt conversations. My sincere condolences.*

Gina Swanson - June 06, 2023 at 11:26 AM

GP

“ *Gladys Perez-Hernandez lit a candle in memory of Valerie Counts*



Gladys Perez-Hernandez - June 06, 2023 at 10:45 AM

JD

“ *Sending my condolences and prayers to the family. May our Heavenly Father provide you strength and comfort during this difficult time.*

Juanita Dix - June 06, 2023 at 08:54 AM

JJ

“ Sending prayers and condolences to Val’s family and friends. 🙏 Val and I were members of the same wine club. Her beautiful smile and personality will be missed💔



Joal Joyner - June 05, 2023 at 09:06 PM

BP

“ Extending sincere heartfelt condolences of sympathy to Valeries family, friends and co-workers. Prayer of comfort for her family and all that crossed her path in this Life. To know her was to love her. Heaven has gained another Angel. Rest in Power.



Brenda Bentley Parrish - June 05, 2023 at 08:11 PM

GA

“ Sending healing prayers and comforting hugs to the family, with my deepest sympathy as I remember my friend and co-worker Valerie.



Gladys Artis - June 05, 2023 at 04:10 PM