



Laurel Catherine Hubbard

September 23, 1938 - June 4, 2026

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." — Song of Solomon 6:3 She was the Rose of Sharon in full bloom - a lily among the thorns of this present world.

On June 4, 2026, Heaven grew richer and this earth grew quieter with the passing of Laurel Catherine (Hesel) Hubbard, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and faithful servant of the Most High God. She came to know the Bridegroom early. At just six years of age, she opened the door of her heart to Jesus Christ - and in the long and beautiful years that followed, she never once closed it. Like the beloved in Solomon's ancient poem who cried, "Draw me away!" (Song of Solomon 1:4), she spent her whole life being drawn ever closer to the One who called her His own. His banner over her was love, and she wore it without shame or hesitation from her childhood to her final breath.

In 1958, she entered into a covenant of marriage with Robert Hubbard - and for nearly sixty-nine years, she was his and he was hers, without wavering. "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song of Solomon 2:16). The world may marvel at the number of years, but those who knew her understood: this was not merely a long marriage. It was a daily choosing - a garden carefully tended, a fountain kept sealed and pure against every storm this world could bring (Song of Solomon 4:12). She honored her vows as holy, because she understood that love, at its truest, is not a feeling but a covenant - and covenants, to her, were sacred ground.

She was a woman of remarkable and varied accomplishment. Her keen intellect and quiet precision carried her into the high reaches of technology, where she served with excellence and integrity in professional roles that demanded both. Her love for learning and her passion for shaping minds then drew her into education and Higher Education, where she poured herself generously into the lives of students and colleagues alike - not merely imparting knowledge, but modeling wisdom. Wherever she was planted, she bore fruit. And yet, for all her professional distinction, those who knew her best understood that her truest credentials were never written on any certificate or plaque. They were written on her character. She walked without guile. She spoke without deception. She loved without condition and served without expectation of reward. In a generation that has made compromise fashionable and virtue quaint, she stood apart - not in pride or judgment, but in quiet and steady example. She never touched what was unclean. She never betrayed what was holy. Like the enclosed garden of which Solomon wrote - "A garden locked is my sister, my bride; a spring locked, a fountain sealed" (Song of Solomon 4:12) - her life was a sacred enclosure, fragrant with integrity, protected by a faithfulness that decades of temptation, hardship, and change could never bend.

The spices of her garden were many: the incense of faithful prayer offered every morning; the myrrh of quiet sacrifice given without fanfare; the spikenard of humble, steady service. "While the king was at his table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance" (Song of Solomon 1:12). Her church knew her as a pillar. Her children knew her as a compass. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren knew her as the family's living definition of goodness. And her God - her Beloved, her Lord Jesus - knew her as His own from the age of six, and held her all the way home.

She leaves behind her devoted husband of nearly sixty-nine years, Robert M. Hubbard; her three children, Rebecca S. Hubbard, Robert A. Hubbard (deceased), and Russell D. Hubbard; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. To each of them she gave the rarest of all gifts: a living,

walking, breathing model of what a human life is supposed to look like when it is yielded fully to God.

No grief, no distance, and no grave can undo what she built or diminish what she gave. The love she poured out over eight decades of faithful living does not disappear with her departure – it is perfected by it, and it goes on bearing fruit in every life she touched.

She has gone, at last, to be with her Beloved - the One she first found at six years old, the One she sought all the days of her life, the One to whom she was utterly and joyfully surrendered.

And in that final moment, she heard at last the words she had always been walking toward: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." - Song of Solomon 2:10 She rose. And she went away beautifully. "She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you can desire are not to be compared to her." - Proverbs 31:10

A memorial service celebrating her life will be held at a later time to be announced. Zoom availability will be used to save having to travel long distances to attend a service. Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, located at 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938, is charge of arrangements.

Please visit www.mitchell-jerdan.com or www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome to light a virtual candle in her honor or share a memory with the family.