

Necrology

Bettejean Ahee, Affiliate



Bettejean Ahee was married to Edmund T. Ahee, Sr., who founded the Edmund T. Ahee Jewelry Company in 1947 and died in 1999. Always a team in family, church, community and business, Bettejean and Edmund sponsored the first Capuchin Souper Summer Celebration in 1981, benefiting the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Bettejean never missed this annual fundraiser, typically standing at the entrance to greet every attendee and waiting for her chance to be in a picture with every Capuchin. By the time of her death, thirty-nine Souper Summer Celebrations had raised over six million dollars benefiting poor people of Detroit.

In gratitude for their financial support, the Province affiliated Bettejean and Edmund on October 22, 1992. Through Bettejean's continuing leadership with other family members, the Ahees made a large contribution toward the building of the Solanus Center in Detroit and established an endowment to support the Capuchin Soup Kitchen that has grown to over one-million dollars.

Bettejean's son John had battled cancer for over 30 years. John credited a prolonged remission to the intercession of Solanus Casey. When John's cancer recurred, Bettejean remarked to daughter Pamula Ahee Thomas that she could not bear the death of a second child. Her son, Edmund, Jr., had died earlier. Her fear didn't materialize as Bettejean died suddenly on October 31, 2020 at the age of 91. John died just moments before Bettejean's wake service began at St. Bonaventure Chapel in Detroit. The wakes and funeral masses of both were held at St. Bonaventure's. Their open caskets spent the intervening evenings next to the tomb of Solanus Casey, to whom both had an enormous devotion. As an affiliate, Bettejean asked to be buried in a Capuchin habit, which spoke to her own humility and friendship with poor people in Detroit.

~ *William Hugo*