

Georgia's First Pimiento Queen from 1950, Named Grand Marshal of 2024 Christmas Parade at Age 91

Georgia was the Pimiento Capital of the World long before it became the Peach State, & Ms. Bettye Jean was its Queen!

WOODBURY, GA, UNITED STATES, November 20, 2024 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The City of Woodbury is proud to announce Ms. Bettye Jean Waddell as the Grand Marshal for its upcoming Christmas Parade. At the age of 91, Ms. Waddell, who was crowned the very first Pimiento Festival Queen in 1950, remains a beloved figure and an enduring symbol of Georgia's rich agricultural history.

A Living Legend

Ms. Waddell, just 16 years old when she was chosen as Georgia's first

Pimiento Queen, is celebrated today as a Georgia State Treasure. Her legacy as an icon of the state's history continues to inspire the community, making her the perfect choice to lead this year's festive celebration.

A Storied Past

The City of Woodbury became synonymous with the pimiento pepper industry when, in the 1920s, it became home to the largest pimiento canning factory in the United States. Declared "The Pimiento Capital of the World" in 1950, Woodbury's Dromedary Plant processed millions of pounds of the sweet pepper until the early 1990s. The annual Woodbury Pimiento Festival & Parade was once the grandest in the country, attracting dignitaries such as Senator Herman Talmadge and Governor Ernest Vandiver.

Ms. Waddell fondly recalls her childhood days helping her father grade peppers, which they would take into town by horse and buggy to sell. Growing up as the youngest of 12 children on a farm with over 200 acres of cotton and smaller plots of pimientos and corn, she recalls, "I hated



Georgia First Pimiento Queen, 16 Year Old, Bettye Jean Waddell in the 1950 Pageant at and Today Age 91 , Proudly Displaying Her Trophy

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Bettye Jean Waddell

picking cotton, but we all had to pitch in."

Upon receiving the invitation to serve as Grand Marshal, Ms. Waddell expressed her excitement: "I was so surprised when the invitation came. I'm most excited about riding in a fancy car, wearing my crown, and waving to all my family and friends!", she shared.

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A Grand Celebration

Mayor Ronnie Garrett and the Parade Committee are

overjoyed by Ms. Waddell's acceptance of their invitation. "Bettye Jean will be the beautiful icing on the cake for what will be a grand event indeed." said Mayor Garrett.

The City of Woodbury Christmas Parade is scheduled for Thursday, December 5th at 6:30 PM. The parade runs down Main Street, through Woodbury's historic district.

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