

1925-2014

LAKE BRIDGEPORT: Millie Bess Gardner, 89, a former longtime resident of Lake Bridgeport, TX, and most recently of Wichita Falls, TX, died on Thursday, October 16, 2014, surrounded by family.

Millie, affectionately known by her grandchildren and many others as "Bomba," was born on March 30, 1925, in Peacock, TX, to Henry Elmer and Sally Schlaepfer. She graduated from Peacock High School in 1943 and married Rayford Paul Gardner on May 25, 1946, in Aspermont. They later moved to Gibtown, TX, and then to Lake Bridgeport, TX, in 1980, where they were members of Lake Bridgeport Baptist Church.

Millie and Rayford were married 57 years before he passed away on Thursday, October 16, 2003. Following his death, she would often dream that he would pull up on a bus destined for heaven and tell her to hop on, but she'd always say, "I'm not ready yet." Finally, 11 years to the day of his passing, she was ready.

Her love for Rayford was unlike any other. Until the day she died she spoke fondly of him, saying he was the most handsome man she'd ever known, and telling all the grandchildren that they looked just like him. She also loved Jesus, and her faith in him showed in everything she did. She loved and hugged on every person she met, and she never had an unkind word to say to anyone. She always gave of herself and made everyone around her feel special. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Rayford; her parents, Henry Elmer and Sally Schlaepfer; her brothers: James and Robert Schlaepfer; her daughter-in-law, Ann Gardner and her great grandson, Ethan Read.

Survivors include her sons: Rayford Paul Gardner, Jr. and wife, Linda, of De Leon, TX; Joe Gardner and wife, Cathy, of Chico, TX; her daughter, Sally Jones and husband, James, of Wichita Falls, TX; her grandchildren: Michelle (Thomas) Riggins of Iowa Park; Reggie (Tory) Gardner of Colorado City, TX; D'Layna (Troy) Greg of Rhome; Heather (Johnny) Willis of Wichita Falls; Debbie (Todd) Morris of De Leon; Burette (Gabrielle) Douglas of Ft. Worth; Brady (Maygan) Gardner of Sanger; Tiffany (Ed) Dixon of Wichita Falls; Alison (Brian) Read of Paradise; Stefani (Gareth) Price of San Antonio; Jeremy (Misty) Ingmire, Midland; Jason (Carrie) Solley, Ft. Worth; Jeff (Freida) Solley, Bridgeport; 36 great grandchildren; 13 great-great grandchildren and many more who considered her family.

Funeral service was held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, October 19, 2014, at Hawkins Funeral Home in Bridgeport with Rev. Gary Demmitt officiating. She will be buried next to her husband in Gibtown, Texas.

*Hawkins Funeral Home
1909 9th St. • Bridgeport, Tx*