



Shirley Elaine Kilgore

September 10, 1938 - December 27, 2024

On September 10, 1938, Shirley Elaine delighted her parents, Ruby Nadine (nee' Hodges) and Arthur Lee Sullivan by making her entrance without bothering to wait for the midwife or any other assistance, she just came on into this world. Much like she did just about everything from there on out, she liked to get the job done. She was the youngest of three girls. The late 30s and early 40s were challenging times in McIntosh County. She grew up working in the garden, picking cotton and helping wherever they were farming next to her parents and two sisters, Loretta and Ruby. It wasn't easy but it developed her strong work ethic. She adored the animals they tended (for food) and at a young age gave up eating meat for quite some time because she just couldn't bear to harm them. This was an early, strong indication of her kind, soft and loving heart. Shirley attended school in Hichita, Oklahoma. In the 3rd grade, to distinguish between all the other Shirleys in her class, she started going by Elaine to anyone other than her family. Immediately following graduation, she married AJ Kelley. Out of that union came the two most devoted loves of her life. Her son, Arthur Carl, and her daughter, Dena. Her young family moved from Checotah to Muskogee when the children were small, and they built a house in the Riverside area. Just down the street was New Hope Baptist Church. She became a faithful active member, raising her children in the church and singing in the choir. Elaine landed a job at Acme Engineering and spent years there, eventually running her own department before taking early retirement. Elaine honed her management skills, becoming

not only efficient but fair. Fairness and listening to both sides of the story became a trademark for her which she not only carried to the end but passed on as well. She enjoyed traveling, especially to Florida. She also relished spending time with friends and all her family. Her grandchildren brought her a particular newfound joy and she doted on each and every one of them. In 2003, Elaine decided to attend a school reunion. That decision would alter the rest of her existence. There she reconnected with a classmate, Robert Kilgore, who in November 2004, became her husband. Not only that, but he also became her constant companion, best friend and some would say, the love of her life. Elaine and Robert were quite the pair and delighted in 20 years married to each other. Elaine left a lovely legacy with the life she lived. Her grace, class, generosity, love and kindness were shining examples to all who encountered her. She is survived by her husband, Robert; sister, Ruby Williams; daughter-in-law, Carrie Faye Kelley; grandchildren, Heather Ezell and husband Kevin; Jason Kelley and wife Ginger; Fallon Kelley; Jesse Tindall; Jordan Kelley and partner Annie Felts; great grandchildren Colton and Zander Kelley; Thatcher, Rayke and Jack Wilson; Lorelei and Rayna Tindall and Finley Faye Kelley. She is also survived by Wytawna Kilgore Habener, Bobby, Mitch and Mark Kilgore as well as numerous beloved nieces, nephews and friends. Viewing is scheduled for noon to 7PM Thursday, January 2, 2025 at Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home in Fort Gibson. Funeral services will be held at New Hope Baptist Church in Muskogee on Friday, January 3, 2025 at 12:00pm with Pastor Sam Dunn officiating. Committal prayers and interment will follow in the Hitchita Lackey Cemetery in Hitchita, OK. The family of Shirley Elaine Kilgore has entrusted her care, services and burial to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home, Fort Gibson. 918-478-2555. Online condolences may be left for the Kilgore family at clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com

Cemetery Details

Hitchita Lackey Cemetery

Boynton, OK 74422

Previous Events

Viewing

JAN 2. 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home (Fort Gibson)
1224 E Poplar St
Fort Gibson, OK 74434
(918) 478-2555

Celebration of Life

JAN 3. 12:00 PM (CT)

New Hope Baptist Church
1501 North 43rd Street East
Muskogee, OK 74403