



Olieta Mae Edwards

January 8, 1932 - December 1, 2023

Celebrating God's Grace

And the life of

Olieta M. Edwards

January 8, 1932 – December 1, 2023

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

--John 3:16

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

--Romans 15:13

It is always difficult saying goodbye to someone we love. Family and friends will miss Olieta Mae (Russell) Edwards of Columbia, Illinois, who was born on January 8, 1932, and passed away on December 1, 2023, at the age of 91. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ray and Myrtle (Springman) Russell, her husband, Kenneth Edwards, and her siblings, Donald Russell and Oneta Vance.

She is survived by her six children:

Penni (John) Barrett of Tulsa, Oklahoma
Karen (Noel) Patterson of Homewood, Illinois
Jeffrey (Karen) Edwards of Bridgeton, Missouri
John (Robin) Edwards of Glen Carbon, Illinois
Celia (David) Gutierrez of San Antonio, Texas
Darla (Robert) Toenjjes of Columbia, Illinois.

She is also survived by nine grandchildren:

Jason Barrett, Audrey Patterson, Kimberly Edwards, DO, Jacob Edwards,
Samuel (Stephanie) Pecaro, Rachel Pecaro, Philip Pecaro,
Jessica Prosser, Kenneth Prosser,
two great grandchildren, Aria and Luca Pecaro,
and other relatives and friends.

Olieta was born and raised in rural Dent County, Missouri. She graduated from Salem High School third in her class in 1949 and married her childhood sweetheart, Kenneth Edwards, on November 11 of that year. The young couple moved to St. Louis and then Columbia, Illinois, where they raised their six children.

Olieta was a busy stay-at-home mom and was active in the local Baptist Church, where she taught Sunday School. She was known for her baking: cookies for school lunches, pies for special occasions, cinnamon rolls for the end-of-school carnival and any time anyone could talk her into it. She was a seamstress; she made clothes for the family, built and regularly recovered a favorite footstool, and once even figured out how to reupholster the couch. When four of the children got chicken pox from the first infected sibling (the youngest wouldn't arrive for a few more years), she made the rounds with calamine lotion.

Olieta found many ways to express her creativity. She always had a project.

She helped Ken with the garden every year and did a lot of canning. Before color film was widely used, she hand-colored photos Ken took for his photography business. She researched family genealogy before Ancestry.com made it easy. She also served as a school crossing guard for a while. Eventually, because she loved finding pretty stones, she learned to cut and polish rocks and gemstones. She and Ken joined a local rock club to share their lapidary interests, and Olieta even opened a lapidary shop where, for a time, she sold jewelry made with the stones she had polished. She also wrote poetry throughout her life. In 2000 she published a collection of her poems, and in 2019 she published her memoirs.

Once when the children were bored, Olieta told them, in jest, to go climb a tree. Excited, they raced outside to do just that. Most of the time, however, they hesitated to claim boredom because she could always find a chore for them. "Always do your best," she'd say, and whenever anyone was feeling downhearted, she would remind them that things would look better in the morning. Even after the children were grown and on their own, she had a sixth sense for whenever things were not going right; often at such times, she would call to check in. And she tried to help however she could. Daughter-in-law Karen especially appreciated the delicious roast beef dinner Olieta brought when their daughter was born and the help she provided getting their house "company ready" when Karen's son passed away.

Olieta never had a chance to learn to play the piano as a child, but she made sure her children got that chance, and she learned along with them. When they were all grown with their own children, she encouraged annual talent shows at family reunions. And, once the children were all out of the house, she went to work at Jefferson Barracks Veterans Hospital. She worked in various departments but most enjoyed the prosthetics department. She took pride in making sure the veterans she served had whatever equipment they

needed and that it fit them properly.

After retirement, Olieta and Ken traveled a bit. At home, Olieta was always the central contact for the family, always just a phone call away, and she hosted many memorable family gatherings. After Ken passed away, she lived alone for several years, during which time all her children assisted in one way or another. Finally, she went to live in Tulsa for nearly three years until a debilitating fall brought her to the nursing home, where she had skilled nursing care for her last eight months.

Olieta has taken up permanent residence in heaven now. She was a loyal and multi-talented daughter, sister, wife, mother, and grandmother. She loved the Lord and she loved her family. We have been blessed to have her in our lives.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

–Psalm 23

The family appreciates your kind thoughts and prayers. If you wish to do anything in her honor, please donate to your own church or favorite charity or take flowers to someone you know in a local nursing home. And contemplate the awesome gift of life here on earth but the much more precious gift of eternal life with God.

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you

and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

-Numbers 6: 24-26

Cemetery Details

North Lawn Cemetery

Hwy 19 North
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-3117
dcjames@fidnet.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com>

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 19. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Salem
103 West Center
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-3117
jgsalemmo@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Funeral Service

DEC 19. 11:00 AM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Salem
103 West Center
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-3117
jgsalemmo@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Olieta Mae Edwards.* ”



December 16, 2023 at 11:47 PM