



Laquetha Joan Guthrie Gardner

February 4, 1936 - May 25, 2025

Laquetha Joan Guthrie Gardner, a believer in Jesus Christ as her lord and savior, a devoted educator, community leader, and beloved matriarch, passed away peacefully on May 25, 2025, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at the age of 89. Born on February 4, 1936, in the home of her grandparents in Antioch, Oklahoma, Laquetha was the cherished daughter of Ocie and Selma (Alexander) Guthrie.

Raised in the close-knit community of Antioch, Laquetha began her education in a two-room schoolhouse, where her lifelong passion for learning first took root. She later graduated from Elmore City High School in 1954, and went on to earn both a Bachelor's degree in Education in 1960 and a Master's Degree in Special Education in 1976 from East Central University.

Laquetha married the love of her life, Ensign James Ray Gardner, in 1957 at the Elmore City Baptist Church. As a proud Naval officer's wife, she balanced grace and resilience while building a life devoted to family, service, and education. Her teaching career spanned decades, with a focus on Special Education in Washington, Oklahoma and Tucson, Arizona, where she made a lasting impact on countless students and families, while also making lifelong friends with a group of teachers she would visit often in Tucson.

An accomplished and active member of numerous lineage and historical organizations, Laquetha's affiliations included the Daughters of the American Revolution, First Families of the Twin Territories, United Daughters of the Confederacy, National Society of Colonial Dames XVII Century, National

Society United States Daughters of 1812, the Oklahoma Genealogical Society, and the Antioch Community Association. Through her efforts, the Antioch schoolhouse where she first learned to read and write was recognized by the Historical Society—a testament to her passion for preserving the past. Laquetha also served as president of the Oklahoma City Chapter of Gold Star Wives, dedicating herself to serving the needs of military widows with strength, compassion, and leadership. She found joy in honoring traditions and supporting fellow military families. Laquetha was one of the 12 founding members of the Oasis Church in Tucson, Arizona.

Her hobbies included genealogy, sewing, scrapbooking, and baking and decorating elaborate gingerbread houses, especially with her great nieces and their classmates. She taught by example—instilling the values of independence, education, self-sufficiency, and most importantly, family.

Laquetha was a breast cancer survivor whose strength, faith, and joy in life inspired all who knew her. Among the many highlights of her life, she was most proud of being a Navy wife, a mother, and a guiding light to the younger generations in her family and community.

She leaves behind a legacy of love, education, heritage, and service that will continue to uplift and inspire generations to come.

Laquetha is survived by her Daughters, Betsy Gardner, Suzanne Gardner-Jacobs and husband Bernie Jacobs, and Junko Ozaki; Grandson, Austin Penner; Granddaughters, Nicki Ozaki, Sheena Ozaki, and Desiree Jones; Nieces, Hope Kelley and Jeff Blake, Jeannie Terrell and husband Joe, Nephews, Shon McWhirter, Shan McWhirter and wife Angie, Randy Ivey and wife Lesa, Tom Gardner and wife Jana; Sisters-in-law, Norma Ivey and Jimmie Ellen Gardner; Great Nieces and Nephews, Dalton McWhirter, Mikayla Dover and husband RJ, Shyann McWhirter, Johnna Webb and husband Brett, Siera McWhirter, and Addison Kelley; four very special great-grand nieces and nephews, and a host of other friends and family.

Laquetha is preceded in death by her husband, James Ray Gardner; Daughter, Gayle Ann Gardner; Parents, Ocie and Selma Guthrie; Sisters,

Patricia Sparks, Johnnie McWhirter; and Brothers-in-law, Robert Gardner and Raymond Ivey.

Services for Laquetha will be Saturday, May 31, 2025 at 1:00 PM at Wooster Funeral Home in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma with interment to follow at Antioch Cemetery in Antioch, Oklahoma. Visitation for Laquetha will be Thursday, May 29, 2025 from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM and Friday, May 30, 2025 from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. If you would like to send your condolences you may do so at www.woosterfuneralhomes.com

Cemetery Details

Antioch Cemetery

Antioch, OK

Previous Events

Public Visitation

MAY 29. 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Wooster Funeral Home and Cremation Services (Pauls Valley)
1601 South Chickasaw
Pauls Valley, OK

Public Visitation

MAY 30. 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Wooster Funeral Home and Cremation Services (Pauls Valley)
1601 South Chickasaw
Pauls Valley, OK

Funeral Service

MAY 31. 1:00 PM (CT)

Wooster Funeral Home and Cremation Services (Pauls Valley)
1601 South Chickasaw
Pauls Valley, OK

Tribute Wall

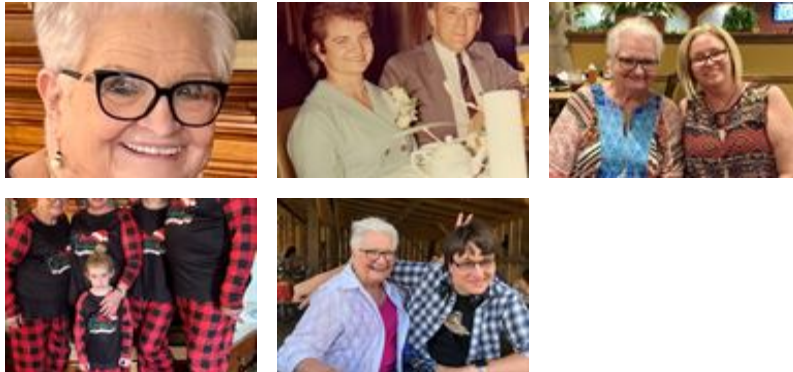
PM

“ My condolences to Laquetha's family. I had the pleasure of working with Laquetha for many years at Corbett. She was a special lady and wonderful teacher. We had many fun times at work and at play. She helped me make a birthday video for my Grandmother's 80 th birthday that was a hit for all the family. We made many Gingerbread houses, aprons, over night trips for Sp. Ed. We laughed, cried, and prayed many times together. She will be missed but never forgotten. God Bless you all, Paula Martinez

Paula Martinez - May 31, 2025 at 05:11 PM



“ 50 files added to the album LifeTributes



Wooster Funeral Home & Cremation Services - May 31, 2025 at 12:21 PM

JO

“ If it weren't for her, we wouldn't have stayed this close. We miss her so much!



Junko Ozaki - May 29, 2025 at 07:47 PM

JT

“ Laquetha was a role model for many Gold Star Wives. She will be missed

Jamie Tomek - May 29, 2025 at 10:43 AM

VV

“ Great memory for me was the time I spent in Oklahoma having coffee with her in the morning walking around outside at the farm house and having some great conversations

Victor Valdez - May 29, 2025 at 10:39 AM

PB

“ I only met Laquetha once when we discovered our Oklahoma family, I treasure amazing memories of how kind and welcoming she was. Such a big heart for everyone xx

Paula Brooks - May 29, 2025 at 06:10 AM