



Ina Jean Gardner

September 16, 1939 - May 12, 2016

Jean "Stormy" Stevens Gardner, 76, Carrabelle, Florida (formerly of Del City, Oklahoma) passed to her heavenly home on May 12, 2016, three days after suffering a heart attack. Her family was by her side.

A visionary and consummate supporter of those she interacted with, Jean mentored and inspired countless others with her "can do" attitude and zest for life. She learned to fly airplanes, she loved painting and photographing sunsets and sunrises, cherished her friendships and loved her family.

One of Jean's greatest interests was in helping women succeed. In 1976, she started and built a very successful Farmers Insurance Agency, becoming a member of the Presidents Council, Farmer's highest level of achievement. During her career, she was active as a leader in Town Club Business & Professional Women's Association, Zonta and American Business Women's Association and she served as Oklahoma's representative to the National Council on the Status of Women in the Workplace. In 1994, she built a beautiful landmark building in Del City, OK located on 15th Street and the I-40 access to function as both her home and the office for her agency.

After leaving the business of insurance, Jean went to Sorrento, Italy to do mission work. During the six months she spent there, she brought beauty with her love of decorating to the small mission church and formed deep and

abiding friendships. In her retirement, Jean continued to help women through her support of Eagle Recovery Center, a haven devoted to helping women rebuild their lives after overcoming drug and alcohol addiction.

Most who knew Jean as a positive, successful business woman never knew of the humble beginnings she rose from? Born Ina Jean Stevens September 16, 1939 in a barn converted to a house in Pumpkin Bend, Arkansas, Jean's early years were filled with challenges. Growing up with a philandering alcoholic father who was verbally abusive, Jean was married and had two babies by the time she was 18. After a severe battle with depression in her 20s, Jean focused on building a positive mental attitude, drawing lessons from Zig Ziglar and others. She studied at Pittsburgh State University, Kansas State Teachers College, and Kansas State University, ultimately receiving dual Masters Degrees in Psychology and Communications. Her study of psychology was aimed at trying to learn about depression and how to overcome it.

Acknowledging that we will always have negative in the world, Jean sought to rise above it, always making a conscious effort to focus on the positive and encouraging those around her to do the same.

Jean was preceded in death by her parents, Ina May and Paul Stevens of Augusta, AR and her brother, Paul Stevens, Jr. of Oklahoma City. She is survived by her loving husband Jerry Gardner of Carabelle, FL, son Steve Leonard (and wife Lisa) of Fort Smith, AR, daughter Donna Myers (and husband David) of Del City, OK, stepdaughter Laurie Bailey (and husband Stuart) of Tishomingo, OK, stepson Jeff Gardner (and wife Susie) of Newalla, OK, grandson Jeremy Leonard and great-granddaughter Cheyenne Leonard, both of Fort Smith, AR, and friends of half a century or more, Lela Lee Stevens (who was also her former sister-in-law) and Ruby Leggett. On February 14, 1976, Jean married Richard Back. Jean and Richard were deeply devoted to one another until his death on September 8, 2012. In his final years, as he slipped into deep dementia, he held fast to the knowledge

that Jean was the love of his life. After Richard's passing, Jean was blessed to find love again with Jerry Gardner. Jerry and Jean moved to Carabelle, Florida in 2013 and lived life to the fullest in their too-short time together on the Forgotten Coast.

Jean sought to do God's will daily. He brought more opportunity and happiness to her life than she had ever imagined or even thought to ask for. She often said "We think we know what would make us happy, but God knows and he will lead us to things beyond our wildest dreams." Her life is a testimony to that truth.

A celebration service will be held Friday, June 3, 2016, 10:00 AM at the Boulevard Church of Christ, 1301 N Drexel Blvd, Oklahoma City. In lieu of flowers, a donation to Eagle Recovery Center 3701 E Reno, Oklahoma City 73117 is suggested.

Previous Events

Service

JUN 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

Oklahoma Church of Christ
1301 N. Drexel Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK