

Groveton News  
2-3-2008

### **BESSIE MAE KEE**

Miss Bessie Mae Kee walked into the Garden and met her Savior on Sunday afternoon, January 20, 2008. She was one hundred three years and four days old.

Miss Kee was born in Keltys, a sawmill town of East Texas on January 16, 1905 to Mary Jane Wheat Kee and James Taylor Kee. She was raised in Nogalus Prairie, Texas on a farm with her five siblings and a large extended family. She graduated from Groveton High School earning her high school certificate and began teaching in small country schools some-times riding a horse to school from home, other times boarding with families in the community. By teaching during the winter term and attending Sam Houston State Teachers College during the summer term, she graduated in 1934 and began to teach in earnest in small communities around East Texas. She earned a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Texas at Austin in 1943.

She began a long and dedicated career at Alvin High School in Alvin, Texas in 1942. Always a lover of words and literature, Miss Bess taught her students how to think and write and an appreciation of English and American Literature. Her high standards and expectations for her students were legend and they loved her. She retired from active teaching in 1971.

She had a remarkable memory and amazed her family with her recollections of her 'former students'. Her students returned the affection to her and she was the centerpiece of many class reunions. Still tutoring high school students at 100, Miss Kee set a high standard for her profession. In a crowning moment of a long and dedicated career, the Alvin Independent School District named the main building at the high school in her honor in 1995.

In 2005 Miss Kee was named as Outstanding Alumna of the School of Education at Sam Houston University.

Miss Kee was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, first initiated by Dr. Annie Webb Blanton, the founder of the organization, in Palestine, Tx in 1934, later joining the Brazoria County Chapter. She served as President of the Alvin Delta Delta Chapter from 1976 through 1978. She was a charter member of the American Association of University Women Alvin Branch, President 1955 - 57, and a founder of the Alvin Retired Teachers Assoc-iation.

Church attendance was always of utmost importance to Miss Kee. She was a founding member of South Park Baptist Church where she taught Sunday school and served as Director of the Sixth Grade Sunday School Class for twenty-five years. She also sang in the choir and was most recently a member of the Keenagers and the Fidelis Sunday School Class.

She was Aunt Bess to sixteen adoring nieces and nephews. She encouraged us, cared for us, and corrected our English. She could peel a whole apple without breaking the skin and she could bait a fish hook without sticking her finger. She attended our graduations, our weddings, and kept pictures of all of our babies on her wall. For all of her adult life she lived independently taking care of her own business. Her life is an example to us all.