

January 2008

BESSIE MAE KEE

Miss Bessie Mae Kee walked into the Garden and met her Savior on Sunday afternoon, January 20, 2008. Miss Kee 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. Miss Kee was raised in Nogalus Prairie, Texas on a farm with her five siblings and a large extended family. Miss Kee graduated from Groveton High School earning her high school certificate and began teaching in small country schools sometimes 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. Miss Kee 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. Miss Kee high standards and expectations for her students were legend and they loved her. Miss Kee retired from active teaching in 1971. Miss Kee had a remarkable memory and amazed her family with her recollections of her 'former students'. Miss Kee 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. Miss Kee served as President of the Alvin Delta Delta Chapter from 1976 through 1978. Miss Kee was a charter member of the American Association of University Women Alvin Branch, President 1955 - 57, and a founder of the Alvin Retired Teachers Association. Church attendance was always of utmost importance to Miss Kee. Miss Kee 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. Miss Kee also sang in the choir and was most recently a member of the Keenagers and the Fidelis Sunday School Class. Miss Kee was Aunt Bess to sixteen adoring nieces and nephews. Miss Kee encouraged us, cared for us, and corrected our English. Miss Kee could peel a whole apple without breaking the skin and she could bait a fishhook without sticking her finger. Miss Kee 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. Miss Kee life is an example to us all. Survivors include her beloved youngest brother Leland Kee, of Angleton; nieces and nephews James McClain, of Livingston, Sam Kee, Frances Kee Arreguin, Phil Kee, Marcy Kee Irwin, and Paula Kee Robinson, all of Houston, Carl Kee, of Elgin, Janice Kee Yiengst, of Dripping Springs, David Kee and Barry Kee, both of Austin, Susan Kee Endendyk of Dallas and Nancy Kee Patterson, of Liverpool; in addition to a host of friends and former students around the state and the nation. Preceded in death by her parents James Taylor Kee and Mary Jane Wheat Kee; brothers Jim Wheat Kee, Morris Kee, and Vernon Kee; and sister Dorris Kee McClain. Graveside Services for Miss Bessie Mae Kee were held Friday, January 25, 2008 at Benett Cemetery, Groveton, Texas, with the Reverend Bruce Peterson officiating. A Memorial Celebration of the life of Bessie Mae Kee was held at South Park Baptist Church at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 26, 2008. Honorary Pallbearers will be her nephews. The Family requests that memorials be made to the Bessie Mae Kee Scholarship Fund in care of Alvin ISD Education Foundation, P.O. Box 2342, Alvin, TX 77512-2342 or the Library at South Park Baptist Church, 1718 S. Johnson Drive, Alvin, TX 77511. Scott Funeral Home