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Houston County Courier

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for lady*

### **JUANITA BELL DUKE THOMPSON**

Mrs. Juanita Bell Duke Thompson, age 84, went home to be with the Lord Friday, August 10, 2007. Mrs. Thompson was born May 6, 1923 in Port Arthur to parents who owned the first grocery store in Pear Ridge, Texas, with older twin brothers, ever her protectors and tormentors.

Mrs. Thompson was naturally competitive and real tomboy. After her father passed away she was only three, she was indulged and doted upon by all her relatives, and naturally craved being in the spotlight and performing. Unusually loquacious from the start, she took elocution lessons and gave readings for the Port Arthur Garden Club and on local radio. Mrs. Thompson took piano lessons as a child and later played a "Honkytonk" piano style for local Baptist Churches.

Mrs. Thompson was proudly claimed by James Robert Thompson, a handsome Aggie, when she was a freshman at Texas Women's University in Denton, he asked her to wait for him until he finished his degree. As a surprise, he brought her home from their honeymoon, to a brand-new, completely furnished house with all her clothes and personal belongings carefully arranged for her arrival in love and happy in their marriage, they went on to have six children over the next 18 years; Sharon Anne, Kathryn Jo, Sandra Jeanne, Judith Lynn, Deborah Sue and (finally) James Robert Thompson, II. They Vacationed every year at Neal's vacation Lodges in Concan, Texas and never missed a chance to swim in any available body of water. Mrs. Thompson was a charismatic, born leader, who never met a stranger, and was a rebel at heart, loving to challenge rules. When she was already the mother of four children and the wife of a traveling husband, she taught herself to drive on the freeways of Houston, and loved to speed when she was behind the wheel.

Mrs. Thompson attended the Baptist Church from childhood but accepted Christ as her personal savior years later as an adult. A member of the Central Baptist Church in Crockett, she gave generously of her time, talents, and money. Mrs. Thompson visited local nursing homes to give comfort.

Mrs. Thompson had a natural affinity for children and youth, and encouraged them to develop their talents and to realize their potential, and took them into her heart and loved them deeply, spending one-on-one time with them and financially supporting their studies.

Mrs. Thompson had many dear friends, especially the members of her Sunday school class. Wherever she went in the community, she cheered and entertained others with her wit and vivacious personality.

Over the last several years, Mrs. Thompson faced innumerable serious health issues with amazing faith and courage. A widow for almost 30 years, she overcame lung disease, a broken hip, surgeries, and extended hospital stays. All who knew her were blessed and challenged by her love of life and faith in God and His amazing grace.

Survivors include her daughter's Sharon Hearne, of Wimberley, Kathryn Ferguson, of