



Mary Charlene Harrell

May 18, 1924 - August 9, 2018

Mary Charlene Harrell, an Inola, Oklahoma, resident, passed away Thursday, August 9, 2018, at the Meadowbrook Nursing Home in Chouteau, Oklahoma, with her daughter at her side. She was 94 years old.

Charlene was born May 18, 1924, in Miami, Oklahoma, to Charles and Willis (Bailey) Demo. She and her older sister, Rosie, grew up in rural Miami on her parents' dairy farm. One of her earliest and fondest memories was of her father giving milk to neighbors who couldn't afford it during the Great Depression.

Charlene loved to tell the story of how she drove a hand-crank Model T to school from the farm and was a member of the 1942 graduating class of Miami High School. After graduation ♦ at 18 years of age ♦ she boarded a train for California to work and live. She remembers her mother telling her, "I thought it was the last time I would see you alive." However, she did end up coming home and graduated from Draughon School of Business in Tulsa. She met A.C. Harrell, Jr., of Tulsa, on a blind date, and they were married on July 27, 1946. After celebrating more than 70 years together, A.C. preceded her in death on January 9, 2017.

Even though Charlene and A.C. had six children (two in their 20s, two in their 30s and two in their 40s), other than a few years here and there, Charlene always worked outside the home. Employed by Spartan Aviation in her early years, National Bank of Tulsa and various law firms, she started with PSO at the anticipated Black Fox site when she was 55 and retired with the company when she turned 70. But 70 was still too early for her to stop working, so she started helping out at her youngest son's law office by answering the phone and helping with her youngest grandchild (the apple of her eye), Rebekah Charlene. She also wrote articles for the Inola Independent and the Claremore Progress. It was only after her health and hearing got the best of her that she started to stay at home on a regular basis. Even then, up until about three months before her death, she would call her children daily to say, "Just checking in and wondering, what's going on today?"

If you live anywhere near Inola or in Rogers County, you would know that her civic life and responsibilities were a very important part of her life. Her close friends Rosalie Griffith and Kay Ingersoll helped us identify some of the organizations that she believed in and worked for. Rosalie said, "She was a woman of many talents, and she demonstrated those talents through her leadership skills. When she had an idea, she acted on it, and when she saw a need, she provided."

When she and her family moved to Inola in 1966, it didn't take long for her to jump right in, beginning by helping find a place for the retired citizens of the town to enjoy the fellowship of others their age. She served on a committee to help get what is known today as the Inola Senior Citizens Building.

She worked with Inola's Hay Day celebration for many years and was instrumental in setting up their by-laws. She was always willing and ready to put on her clown costume and walk in the parade to pass out candy. Her last Hay Day Parade was this past June when she rode with her son Stan in his campaign for Associate District Judge of Rogers County. She was instrumental in helping to get "Walt's Haunted Hayride" started every Halloween and worked very hard on it each year, with proceeds going to philanthropic causes.

Although she was not a runner or an athlete, she was instrumental in organizing the first Inola Run for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and it continues today. They celebrated the 37th year of the Inola Run this past June.

Charlene served on the Rogers County Adult Day Care Board of Directors for several years and worked tirelessly for United Way. She could be seen soliciting donations at the four-way stop in town on a Saturday morning, challenging herself to raise more than she did the year before.

She also served on the board of directors for Safenet Services in Claremore, the domestic violence abuse shelter, finding ways to help families cope, get to a safe haven and break the cycle of domestic abuse.

She was a longtime member of the Inola Area Chamber of Commerce and served as president. She has been recognized by the chamber as an honorary member.

Charlene was a Life Active member of ESA, a nonprofit philanthropic organization, and was an active member of the Sigma Chapter in Inola until a few years ago when she had to take a leave of absence. She also served as a district coordinator and resided as the

Oklahoma state president in 1988-89.

She never wavered from any project. When she was in charge, you knew who the boss was. She always said she may not have a lot of money to give, but she had time and time she gave. She made a difference and set an example for all of us on what one person can accomplish with hard work and determination.

Charlene was a loving wife, mother and grandmother and will be missed by so many. She is survived by four sons, Scott Harrell (Lynn) of Inola, OK, Doug Harrell (Jane) of Oologah, OK, Todd Harrell (Rhonda) of Tulsa, OK, and Stan Harrell (Jennifer) of Claremore, OK; one daughter, Patrice Jones (Rod) of Inola, OK; 15 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and six great-great-grandchildren; two sisters-in-law, Ella Mae Chronister and Lois Yeager, both of Tulsa, OK; one brother-in-law, Don Harrell of St. Charles, MO; many nieces and nephews; and a host of friends. Charlene was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Rosie McMains; her loving husband, A.C.; one son, Randy Harrell; and one great-grandson, Brockman Jones.

Celebration of Life Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 18, 2018, at the First Baptist Church in Inola, OK.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Safenet Services in Claremore, OK, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN, or the charity of your choice.

Events

AUG **Family will greet friends** 03:00PM - 07:00PM

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Inola Funeral Home & Crematory

310 N. Broadway, Inola, OK, US, 74036

AUG **Memorial** 10:30AM

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First Baptist Church

500 East Commercial Street, Inola, OK, US, 74016

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



MMS-Payne Funeral Service and Crematory - August 16, 2018 at 12:41 PM



“ 1 file added to the album LifeTributes



MMS-Payne Funeral Service and Crematory - August 17, 2018 at 11:47 AM



“ 63 files added to the album LifeTributes



MMS-Payne Funeral Service and Crematory - August 16, 2018 at 11:31 AM



“ Barbara Knowlton purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mary Charlene Harrell.



Barbara Knowlton - August 16, 2018 at 10:55 AM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Mary Charlene Harrell.



August 13, 2018 at 12:00 PM



“ Charlene was a bright light! She may have been 94 years but she had the spirit of a much, much younger person. I loved her smile! One of my favorite memories of her was on her 94th birthday. She wore these funky glasses and a lei around her neck. She was having a blast as we celebrated her birthday! I had no idea about her history. She was an amazing woman! Thank you, Charlene. It was a joy knowing you.

Treat Hicks - August 12, 2018 at 11:22 PM



“ Carol lit a candle in memory of Mary Charlene Harrell



Carol - August 12, 2018 at 12:45 AM



“ Marlene lit a candle in memory of Mary Charlene Harrell



Marlene - August 11, 2018 at 11:16 PM



“ Pat lit a candle in memory of Mary Charlene Harrell



Pat - August 11, 2018 at 10:58 AM