



Merlyn Frances Spain

January 6, 1926 - May 31, 2016

Merlyn Frances Spain passed quietly into the hands of our Lord on Tuesday, May 31, 2016 in her 90th year. A friend to all and loved as Mom, Merlyn, Mema, Mimi, and Auntie Mae, she left an indelible mark on everyone she met, especially the lucky children who sat on her lap.

Born January 6, 1926 to Mary Frances Neaves Viles and Edmond Lafayette Viles, Merlyn was raised in Golden, Colorado and graduated from Loretto High School. She married William Franklin Spain in 1944 and together they raised 5 children, beginning in rural mining camps and as far away as Melbourne, Australia. This small-town gal taught the miners tricks, charmed the Aussies, and built a network of friends throughout Texas. Shaped by the dark days of the depression, Merlyn was forever compassionate and always giving. She taught her children to share and forgive, to look forward, not backward, and to trust in faith whenever challenges mount. In and around her home, Merlyn was always in motion: gardening, sewing, cleaning, or cooking.

Merlyn returned to college in 1968, graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Houston in 1974, and immediately began teaching English at Northbrook High School. She brought Shakespeare to life in her classroom, ignited passion in her students, and challenged the underperforming to reach beyond imaginable limits. Once retired and following her husband's death in 1989, Merlyn moved to Tyler, Texas and expanded her role as grandmother.

As a member of Marvin United Methodist Church, Merlyn was actively involved with the Crusaders Class and Missions Week. She was a member of the Fairmont HOA, the book clubs Littera and Quid Nunc, UT Tyler Friends of the Arts, and the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary. She further served as president of several of these organizations.

Merlyn is survived by her sons, William Spain, Jr. (Reliquias, Portugal), Dr. Stephen Spain and wife Jill (Tyler, TX), and daughter Linda Spain de Bruin and husband George (San Francisco, CA), 14 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren in Texas, California, Oregon, Massachusetts, New York, and Australia. She is also survived by her sister Lillian Jennings of Nevada and many beloved nieces and nephews. Merlyn was preceded in death by her parents, siblings Lloyd Viles and Vivian Waterman, her husband, and her children Carol and Paul.

The family wishes to express their sincerest gratitude to her loving and attentive caregivers Norma Seago and Virginia Bailey, as well as the staff of the Hospice of East Texas.

Merlyn's family welcomes friends and family to join in a celebration of her life on Saturday June 11, 2016 at 11:00 AM at Stewart Family Funeral Home, 7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy, Tyler, TX 75703, (903) 581-2008, with Rev. Gerry Giles officiating. For those unable to attend, the service will be live-streamed and accessible via this link where comments and pictures can also be shared <http://www.stewartfamilyfuneral.com/obituaries/Merlyn-Spain/>

Merlyn will be laid to rest beside her husband at the National Veterans' Cemetery in Houston. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to Marvin United Methodist Church, 300 W. Erwin St., Tyler, TX 75702, The Hospice of East Texas Foundation, 4111 University Blvd., Tyler, TX 75701 or the

Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County, 211 Winchester Dr., Tyler, TX 75701.

Cemetery Details

Houston National Cemetery

10410 Veterans Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77038

Previous Events

Mem. Service

JUN 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 581-2008

Tribute Wall



“ Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Merlyn Frances Spain



Stewart Family Funeral Home - June 13, 2016 at 02:18 PM

BS

“ I was a student in the mid 70s. She was a very nice lady and a great teacher. She made a difference.

Buster Stahl - August 27, 2016 at 02:38 PM



“ What a wonderful woman! Had the privilege of being in the Festival Garden Club with her. We worked on several committees together. She was easy to love. Janis Pulver

Janis Pulver - June 14, 2016 at 09:16 AM

AJ

“ 3 files added to the album Photos with Merlyn



Annika Jisvall - June 11, 2016 at 09:02 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* was purchased for the family of Merlyn Frances Spain.



June 09, 2016 at 07:29 PM



“ *Blooming Garden Basket* was purchased for the family of Merlyn Frances Spain.



June 09, 2016 at 12:58 PM



“ *Margo and Ken purchased the Spring Has Sprung Mixed Basket* for the family of Merlyn Frances Spain.



Margo and Ken - June 07, 2016 at 10:46 AM



“ *Basket of Joy* was purchased for the family of Merlyn Frances Spain.



June 06, 2016 at 06:42 PM

JT

“ *We had the pleasure to share some good times with Merlyn.
Best wishes to Steve & family.*

Jack Taylor - June 05, 2016 at 10:29 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Sean Spain - June 05, 2016 at 01:42 AM

LB

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Linda Spain de Bruin - June 04, 2016 at 10:10 AM

LB

“ *1 file added to the album Photos with Merlyn*



Linda Spain de Bruin - June 04, 2016 at 09:58 AM

TK

“ *The Echols Family & Will & Pam Kerr purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Merlyn Frances Spain.*



The Echols Family & Will & Pam Kerr - June 03, 2016 at 05:25 PM

CB

“ *Merlyn was such an active part of Marvin UMC, always smiling and willing to work in all areas of the church. I knew Merlyn through United Methodist Women and also had the honor of serving her communion at Meadow Lake during the past few years. She was a wonderful woman with a sweet, sweet spirit. I know she is secure now in the arms of Jesus. God bless Dr. Spain & family, as well as her caregivers, Norma and Virginia.*
Caro Bartley

Caro Bartley - June 03, 2016 at 07:27 AM

GC

*Merlyn was a good neighbor, a good friend and the best story teller I have ever known! She and Bill opened their hearts and home to my family and we loved them dearly.
Rest in peace dear friend.
The Cropper family
Genon & Bill*

Genon Cropper - June 10, 2016 at 03:44 PM

AJ

Sending blessings and love to all of you today.

Annika Jisvall - June 11, 2016 at 08:57 AM