



Retha Jean Curtis

August 6, 1923 - June 15, 2022

Retha Jean Curtis was born on August 6, 1923 in Pirtle, Oklahoma, to Laura Ferguson Decker and Charlie Petty “Son” Decker. Often moving as a young girl with her family, she attended school at Bennington, Tuttle, and Caddo, and finally graduated high school from Blue. Working her way through college, she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Education from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where she met her love, Otho “Sweetpea” Curtis. They married on December 24, 1943. Sweetpea left to serve in World War II shortly thereafter and she began her teaching career at Nida, where she taught English, Typing, Shorthand, and Office Practice. In 1949, they moved their family, now complete with a daughter and son, to Newcastle where she taught there until retirement in 1984. She loved teaching, treasured her students, and would tell stories about many of them even until recently. She also taught both of her own children Senior English. They, as well as many others, would say she was the best teacher they ever had. Retha had many interests and hobbies, including gardening, dancing (you could find them at the Moose Lodge every Saturday), shopping (every day at the mall and then to Luby’s to recharge), decorating her home, playing pitch with her family, researching her genealogy, traveling, and cooking (best homemade bread, pineapple upside down cake and pecan pie, hands down!). She was an excellent seamstress, pianist, and writer. Her grandkids remember her as a good listener with a great sense of humor, a snazzy dresser, and a best friend. Her love, Sweetpea, passed in 2008 after nearly 65 years of marriage and she

moved to Muskogee in 2013 to live with her daughter. Her son followed shortly thereafter to be near to her. When the time came for her to move to a nursing facility in April 2021, Eastgate Village got a special visitor, whom they loved so well. She was spirited, feisty, funny, and kept them all hopping. She “got her wings” (her words two days before she passed) on June 15, 2022.

She will be greatly missed. She dedicated her life to the Lord at an early age and was baptized in the Blue River at Pirtle. She recommitted her life to Him again several months ago.

She is survived by her daughter, Juliana Sherrell, and son, Alan Decker Curtis, both of Muskogee; granddaughter, Kristi Schafer and her husband Randy and boys Braden and Bennett, of Oklahoma City; granddaughter Jennifer Curtis and daughter Viviana Wittrock of Scottsdale, Arizona; granddaughter Jeanie Bishop and husband Jason and boys Blake, Brett, Ben, and Jaden, of Muskogee, and their daughter Brittini Markum and husband Luke, and two kids, Paisleigh and Kooper of Stillwater; and granddaughter Amanda Noel and husband Jonathan and their children Gabriel and Emelia, of Raleigh, North Carolina. She is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews and their families, whom she loved dearly. She was preceded in death by her parents, and her three brothers: Paul, Charles, and Jack.

Arrangements have been made by Cornerstone of Muskogee along with Wilson-Little of Purcell. There will be a visitation time at Cornerstone on Tuesday the 21st from 5pm to 7pm, and at Wilson-Little in Newcastle on Wednesday evening the 22nd from 5pm to 7pm. Funeral service will be held at the First Baptist Church in Newcastle on Thursday the 23rd at 10:00 in the morning, followed by a graveside service in Durant, Oklahoma at Highland Cemetery at 3:00pm.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions be made to Southeastern Oklahoma State University in memory of Retha Jean Curtis via the Southeastern Foundation. Contributions may be made online at www.se.edu/giving. Contributions by check may be mailed to: Southeastern Foundation, 425 West University Blvd., Durant, OK 74701.

Previous Events

Family to greet friends

JUN 21. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory
1830 North York Street
Muskogee, OK 74403
(918) 682-1500

Tribute Wall



“ *Retha Jean Curtis*

October 23, 2023 at 09:38 AM



“ *I loved both Mr. & Mrs. Curtis. I will never forget Retha Curtis' laugh at some of the boys who tried to play tricks on her in English classes. Bob Holman, now deceased, was one of the pranksters & Marvin Patterson was guilty of trying to trick her in class. Mrs. Curtis would always laugh about what they had done to try to get out of their reading books & stories. They tried to do everything from spelling their names backwards imitating the authors. Of course, they never could fool her! My husband Jerry & I owned the local grocery store in Newcastle. I dressed up on Halloween like a bag lady. Mrs. Curtis laughed when she figured out that it was me. She told me that Mr. Curtis was sitting in the car in front of the store & that I should go out & try to get into the car with him. Well he saw me & immediately locked the door & wouldn't talk to me. Mrs. Curtis got a good laugh about the whole thing. I will never forget both as my favorite teachers, Coach & people.*

Mary Petty

Mary Petty - June 21, 2022 at 02:11 PM



“ *As a student of the Newcastle Schools (Class of '75)I was privileged to have known both Mr. and Mrs. Curtis. They inspired my life with their wit and wisdom. Heaven has a hard row to how now, Retha Curtis will be grading the papers!! (I checked for errors several times by the way...) Condolences to family and friends. She was a fire cracker!*

Becky Fletcher Turner - June 21, 2022 at 03:35 AM

VD

“ I remember Retha Jean, Sweet Pea and Juliana from our Decker reunions in Texas years ago. She was a beautiful and gracious lady. My sympathy goes out to her family.

My sister was the genealogist for our branch of the Decker family, and I remember the two of them sharing Decker family information. I am sad to say that after my sister passed away 14 years ago, our family records have not been kept up to date.

Vergie Decker Dotson - June 20, 2022 at 05:03 PM

KC

“ Mrs. Curtis what a lady and love for her students and her love for teaching. If you had her English class you were prepared for college classes. She taught several of my siblings over the years and even told stories in class embarrassing me in a good way. I fondly remember her. Prayers for the family Karen Fischer/Canary

Karen Canary - June 20, 2022 at 03:20 PM

EC

“ Loved that lady and Sweet Pea, dropped by their home many times when I went to OKC or Norman. I would show up and simply walk in and was always welcomed with open arms. Retha was always funny and I loved that lady's laugh it was so funny.



Edward Lee Curtis - June 18, 2022 at 09:49 PM