



Achsah Bernice Kelly

March 31, 1921 - December 31, 2010

Achsah Bernice Gray Kelly was born on March 31, 1921 in Dallas, Texas and died on Dec. 31, 2010 in Dallas. She is preceded in death by her husband, George E. Kelly. She is survived by 3 children, 8 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren.

Her parents were Thomas Lee Gray and Agnes Katherine Lees Gray.

Her name Achsah comes from the Book of Judges in the Bible, but because her first name is hard to spell and pronounce, she often used her second name, Bernice. She had an older brother Thomas Lee Gray Junior and an older sister, Nellie Gray. Her father was the owner and operator of a bakery. She attended Dallas public schools and Crozier Tech High School. She graduated from St. Edward's Catholic High School in Dallas. She paid the tuition of five dollars a month to attend Catholic High School by working in her father's bakery part-time. She won the Linz Award for knowledge of religion when she was a senior in high school, even though she was not yet a Catholic. She particularly enjoyed English classes where she learned about literature, poetry and Shakespeare's plays. She memorized many poems which she could recite even late in life. She was a lifelong collector of poetry and books.

She worked in her father's bakery as a bookkeeper and clerk after she finished high school. There she met George Earl Kelly who worked as a baker. After George entered the Army at the beginning of World War II, Bernice and George were married in 1942. She traveled to Florida and lived

near the Army base where George was a drill sergeant and trained troops for service in Europe. They moved to Camp Edwards in Massachusetts later while George served as a military policeman throughout the war. While in Massachusetts, the couple welcomed their first daughter Bernice Agnes Kelly. After George completed his service in the Army, Bernice and George moved to San Antonio, Texas where George worked as a boiler technician and inspector for a gas company. In the 1950's, they moved back to Dallas, and George began working for Employer's Casualty Company as an inspection engineer. Their second daughter Georgia Ann Kelly was born at that time. Bernice was baptized in the Catholic Church in 1955. The family moved to Lancaster in 1957, after the birth of their third daughter Gena-B Kelly. Bernice loved being a homemaker and raising her children. She taught them to read by reading to them. She supported their interests and activities by participating in the PTA at their schools, and working with Girl Scouts and 4-H. She helped them with their homework and encouraged reading and participation in Library summer reading programs. She encouraged her daughters to go to college. She learned to sew when her girls were young, and she excelled at sewing clothing. She sewed constantly for her girls, and later, for her grandchildren. She supported her husband's campaigns for local office, and his volunteer work with the police emergency squad. Celebrating the holidays with family members was the highlight of every year for her. Her home is still full of the artwork, science projects, books and craft projects of her children and grandchildren. While her youngest children were in high school, she worked part-time as a library clerk at Veteran's Memorial Library.

In the 1970's, Bernice enjoyed taking courses at Mountain View College. She later worked as a media clerk for Mountain View College for a while. Her family attended the newly formed St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Lancaster. She visited her parents in Dallas, and, after her father died, she frequently helped her mother until her death. She enjoyed crocheting, and she donated items she made to Parkland Hospital Social Services and to pro-life

charities.

Bernice and George have eight grandchildren. They are Bill Voss, George Voss, Jenifer Perez, Enoch Basnett, Sarah Mains, Elijah Basnett, Lilah Holt and Joseph Fitzhugh. Bernice loved having her grandchildren visit for birthdays, holidays, and at any time. Whenever they dropped in, cookies, pies, and other baked goods she and George had made were available. She was known for her pumpkin and pecan pies. For those grandchildren who lived nearest her, she and George took an active part in their everyday lives by baby-sitting, taking them to preschool classes, or walking them from school to their house, where Grandma helped them with homework and they played in the backyard and entertained pets. She loved having grandchildren visit at Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas and birthdays. Making holidays enjoyable with special foods and decorations was important work to her.

She was a strong-willed, hard-working woman who loved her family and home.

Bernice did not care much for television and she never touched a computer, but she did stay in touch by phone and sent letters and cards to her family and friends frequently. She loved hearing from her niece Suzanne, and having any relatives or neighbors visit.

Her husband George died in 1990, with Bernice at his side. Bernice remained at the family home. She continued her sewing and crocheting projects, her yard work, and her hosting of family gatherings. She was active in watching local city politics, and always voted. She rescued countless hurt and stray dogs, cats, and birds throughout her years. She watched the weather news closely, especially after a destructive tornado hit Lancaster, but left her house mostly untouched. And as she grew older, her pets were very important to her and were a constant source of stories and entertainment. Her daughter and

son-in-law Greg Fitzhugh and their son Joseph, frequently helped around her house. In 2007, they moved in to care for her in her home. In her later years, Bernice struggled with limited mobility. She enjoyed visits and phone calls from friends and family. She was dedicated to caring for her beloved cats. She enjoyed sitting on her porch on warm afternoons.

Bernice died after a brief illness on Dec. 31, 2010 surrounded by family members. She is survived by 3 children, 8 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. Great- grandchildren and great-great grandchildren include:

Brittany Smith (Lyle): 2 children;
Jenifer Perez, (Robert): 4 children;
George Voss, (Maria): 3 children;
Sarah Mains (Josh): 1 child
Elijah Basnett (Kathy): 1 child
Lilah Holt (Mike): 3 children

Tribute Wall



“ *My prayers to the family of such a wonderful lady. God has certainly embraced your family with His grace and love.*

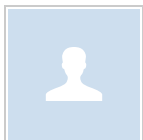
*Cheryl Bain
Religious Education Director
St. Joseph - Waxahachie##imported-begin##Cheryl
Bain##imported-end##*

January 04, 2011 at 12:15 AM



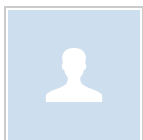
“ *Mrs. Kelly's memory will always bring a smile to our faces and warmth to our hearts. Although she will be missed by those she left behind, she will be a joyous addition to the heavenly choir. She was a blessing to us all.##imported-begin##Jason, Hila & Tom
Lewis##imported-end##*

January 03, 2011 at 12:23 PM



“ *I am very sorry for your loss. My prayers are with the family.##imported-begin##Robin Maulden##imported-end##*

January 03, 2011 at 07:16 AM



“ *Goodbye grandma. The seeds you planted in our lives will bloom and grow forward forever.##imported-begin##Sarah
Mains##imported-end##*

January 02, 2011 at 02:57 PM



“ We miss you greatly grandma##imported-begin##lilah holt##imported-end##

January 02, 2011 at 01:59 PM



“ Thinking of all your family and friends; know that your time with them enriched their lives and futures in more ways than you will ever know. Peace to you.##imported-begin##Jennifer Milam##imported-end##

January 02, 2011 at 11:20 AM



“ We love you grandma and we will miss you dearly. May you be riding on the wings of angels with Grandpa by your side. We will never forget you or the legacy you left with us all. Love you always and forever your granddaughter Jen & family##imported-begin##Jenifer Voss-Perez##imported-end##

January 02, 2011 at 10:47 AM



“ Miss you mama##imported-begin##kelly brown##imported-end##

January 01, 2011 at 07:59 PM