



Celia Hightower Hardage

November 3, 1932 - January 17, 2024

In a letter to the new believers of Corinth, the Apostle Paul once wrote of a homesickness for heaven: a groaning and longing for our heavenly home. After 91 years on this earth, Celia certainly understood this. But as a strong woman of faith, she also knew her beloved God's Word when it promised "weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." On the morning of January 17, 2024, the rejoicing was from Celia Hightower Hardage as she shook off her earthly body to return to the home of her Lord and Savior.

Celia Beul Hightower was born on November 3, 1932 in Groesbeck, Texas. She was the middle of three daughters to Willard and Winnie Mae Hightower, and known as "Cel" to her many friends. Celia adored her father and had huge respect for her mother, who worked as a head librarian. Celia was a cheerleader in high school and still had the uniforms to prove it: one year the skirts came down to her shin, the next year the style changed to above the knee. Times were changing and Celia was all too happy to change with them.

At 18 years old, Celia was given a promise ring by the handsome Navy sailor who would become her husband of over 40 years. Once back from serving in the Korean War, Harold Hardage and Celia were wed and ultimately settled in Texas City, Texas where Harold found work at the refineries. They happily began their family by welcoming daughter Mae Cathleen in 1955 and

daughter Cynthia Harolda in 1957.

Celia would always remark that her greatest joy was found in being a mother to her two children. “The two most beautiful babies you have ever seen!” Both babies grew to be amazing women of faith, and both readily claim they owe this to their mother’s steadfast influence.

Having had a mother with a successful career while growing up surely had influenced Celia, for she found herself with one of her own. Celia began working as a receptionist for Dr. Reeves, but her employer quickly discovered she was amazing with their clients and so began giving her responsibilities more akin to trained social workers. Finally, after encouragement from her boss, Celia received the training to begin a career as a case worker helping families all over Galveston County. Her clients all loved her, and her tireless devotion was even covered in a newspaper article. Celia officially retired in 1985 but remained a servant to families in need sprinkled throughout the Houston area for years afterward. There would be no more newspaper articles, however, as Celia was a humble believer in Matthew 6:3. She felt that when helping others it should only be between you and God. There must be many accolades we could list here today --like how we discovered she secretly volunteered at a Houston homeless shelter-- but her crown in Heaven is heavy with jewels of service that only her Savior knows of. This is most certainly how Celia wanted it.

Celia loved her eldest daughter Cathy’s husband, Adrian Arnold, and always called him “Son.” After reading an article on how to build a little holiday cottage, Celia shared the article with her home builder Son and the rest was history. The cabin was built on land Celia owned and was christened “Beulah-Land,” an allusion to the bible and a nod at its landowner’s middle name. It’s truly easy to feel a closer relationship to God while sitting on the cabin’s front porch, as Celia’s family found themselves for decades celebrating

Christmases, Mother's Days, and family birthdays. It remains a beloved family spot and Celia's family will be able to think of her there for generations to come.

Celia relished being a grandmother to her two granddaughters, Jennifer and Natalie, whom she nicknamed her Heart, and her Heartbeat—claiming they were two things she couldn't live without. Jennifer and Natalie loved visits to their Mimi's house because it always involved jaunts to Willies (our special name for Goodwill) to buy treasures like old prom dresses for make believe under the antique chandelier in her living room. Mimi was an amazing cook and her Heart, Jennifer, has always claimed that surely what they serve in heaven is her Mimi's delicious chicken fried steak. Mimi was the inventor of "wow kisses," a hard smack on the lips, with eyes open real big, and a loud yell of "wow!" at the end. Both granddaughters went on to make her a great grandmother four times over with the birth of their children. The wow kisses got passed on.

Celia loved fashion and was known to create her own trends. She would tie decorative scarves around the handle of a purse, or sprinkle gold glitter in her hair to match the gold trim in an outfit. Her daughter Cathy always compared Celia to Lucile Ball: she was wacky and fun. Cathy was quoted in her high school yearbook as saying her mother was her best friend. Celia was beautiful but hated being photographed. She had the best laugh in the world: if you got her to throw her head to the side, close her eyes and guffaw you felt charmed. Celia is a lifesaver, who once leapt to action and performed the Heimlich maneuver in the middle of a crowded restaurant. Celia loved gardening and to be outdoors; she knew the names of most birds and plants. She loved to read and listen to her favorite pastors on the tv or radio. One of her favorites, Charles Stanley, proceeded Celia in death by less than a year so I'm sure she will be excited to meet him in Heaven. They will have a lot to talk about as

Celia had wonderful discussions about her faith with anyone who would listen. She knew her Bible front to back but was reading it closely for new insight until the day she died. Celia became something of a nomad in her later years and loved to jump in her car to travel the state, often stopping off to see a sunrise in Beulah Land. While recovering from hip surgery, Celia moved in with her younger daughter, Cindy in Lancaster, Texas where she remained until her passing. There she enjoyed the amazing meals Cindy spoiled her with and the comfort of their many sweet pets. It was there, with both daughters holding her hands, that Celia was able to slip into the arms of her Maker. Her homesickness healed, her soul at rest, surely hearing the words "Well done, my good and faithful servant! Come and share your Master's happiness!"

We, Celia's survivors, wish to share in her happiness as well. Survived by: Daughter Cathy Arnold and Son-in-Law, Adrian Arnold of Bartonville, Texas. Daughter Cindy Hardage of Lancaster, Texas. Granddaughter Jennifer Arnold Galitz, and spouse, Dan Galitz of Corinth, Texas. Granddaughter Natalie Arnold Martin of Lewisville, Texas. Great-Grandchildren Presley, Brady and Brett Galitz and Henry Martin. Sister, Martha Hightower Randolph of Santa Fe, Texas. We remain earthside but know one day we will see Celia again in Heaven. Until then we challenge you all to be like Celia and reach out to serve others with nary a soul knowing but the Lord Himself. May your obituaries be longer in Heaven than they are here on earth. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." ~Psalm 116: 15

A celebration of Celia's life will be at graveside on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 1:00pm in Thornton Cemetery in Thornton, TX.

A reception will be immediately following the graveside at Thornton Methodist Church, 1302 S. Marshall Street, Thornton, TX.

Cemetery Details

Thornton Cemetery

Thornton, TX 76687

Previous Events

Graveside

JAN 20. 1:00 PM (CT)

Thornton Cemetery
446 W. Eighth Street
Thornton, TX 76687

Reception

JAN 20 (CT)

Thornton Methodist Church
1302 S. Marshall Street
Thornton, TX

Tribute Wall

NB

“ My mother also worked for Dr. Reeves as well, Nora Saunders, his nurse. I remember your Mom fondly. She always conducted herself as a true southern lady. So sorry for your loss, but know the heavens have a new angel.

Nora Bessire

Nora Bessire - January 26, 2024 at 03:32 PM

OB

“ Mom and I admired your mom. She was such a nice lady. I remember what sweet and loving eyes she had, especially for us little guys. Jennifer wrote a beautiful obituary. May she rest in peace and may her memory be eternal. I've been realizing lately that we've all known each other since we were born. That's a long time. We love Yall so much.

Olga and Bill

Olga and Bill - January 20, 2024 at 09:02 PM

CA

Thank you for your sweet words. We love you, too.

Cathy Arnold - January 22, 2024 at 08:14 PM

CH

Thank you for the kind words, love you guys too ❤️

Cindy Hardage - January 23, 2024 at 10:02 AM

CD

“ So many memories from long ago. The famous look over her shoulder with eye browse raised and the mistivous smile. The day she came over during a hurricane to check on us, wind almost blowing her over. Cindy & I where always up to something, even though she knew, she let us think we got one over. The one most touching thing that always brings good tears to my eyes, is the simple note she sent to me when I was going through times was that I always have a port in the storm. I know she now is in her port.

Charlene Dove - January 20, 2024 at 01:44 PM

CA

Thank you for sharing. Mom touched so many. ❤️❤️

Cathy Arnold - January 22, 2024 at 08:17 PM

CH

Thank you Char, she loved you like a daughter ❤️

Cindy Hardage - January 23, 2024 at 10:04 AM

SH

“ Shawn, Brice, Veessie, Demetrius, Hollye planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Celia Hightower Hardage.

Shawn, Brice, Veessie, Demetrius, Hollye - January 19, 2024 at 02:47 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Celia Hightower Hardage.



January 19, 2024 at 02:47 PM

SJ

“ Samuel James purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Celia Hightower Hardage.



Samuel James - January 19, 2024 at 11:11 AM

SJ

“ Samuel James planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Celia Hightower Hardage.

Samuel James - January 19, 2024 at 11:11 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Celia Hightower Hardage.



January 19, 2024 at 09:34 AM

TC

“ I just finished reading Mrs. Hardage's tribute. Just incredibly written and really got to me. I always thought the world of your mother. When we were kids growing up I just thought she was a gorgeous and young at heart woman. I looked up to her and watched how she did things. I tried to emulate some of her moves when I was a teenager and young adult. Like the way she would position her free leg when she was driving. 😊 I always felt good being around her. She did have the most wonderful laugh that would shower you with wonder. One cool lady in my child's eye. And now looking back, my memories of her make me smile. May her memory be eternal. ❤️

Thea Choate - January 18, 2024 at 05:35 PM

CA

Thank you for sharing your memories of Mom. They warmed my heart.

Cathy Arnold - January 22, 2024 at 08:16 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Celia Hightower Hardage.



January 18, 2024 at 02:03 PM



“ Rose Impression Casket Spray was purchased for the family of Celia Hightower Hardage.



January 18, 2024 at 01:06 PM