



Edith West

November 17, 1928 - December 6, 2021

Clara Edith Gray West, aged 93, of Tuni, passed peacefully into eternity on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. She was greeted there by her husband, the late John Branch (J.B.) West, her three sons, John West, Gary West, and Randy West, each of whom had preceded her on this journey, as well as by her parents Irene and William Gray, her brother Louis Gray, and her beloved West Family brothers- and sisters-in-law, with whom she was always exceptionally close.

She is survived by her daughter, Debra West and son-in-law, Rod Risley, of West Memphis, along with seventeen grandchildren spanning multiple generations, each of whom was her favorite.

Edith was born on Nov. 17, 1928, in Round Pound. Her family later moved to Phillips County. It was there, during her senior year at Elaine High School, that she reluctantly agreed to go on a blind date with the best friend of her cousin's boyfriend. Both men had recently returned stateside, after serving in The War, and Edith's date that night was a lanky young GI everyone referred to as J.B. The date must have gone pretty well, because a few short months later they were married by a Cross County Justice of the Peace. From there, they embarked on a life journey together as a farm family, first as share croppers in Burnt Cane, before later establishing roots of their own on Crowley's Ridge, just south of Forrest City.

Together, Edith and JB worked tirelessly raising four children and

countless pets and livestock, while farming cotton, soybeans, and wheat, along with acres and acres of vegetables (for personal consumption and to share with family and friends) in the fertile delta land east of Crowley's Ridge. Their hard work earned them the title of St. Francis County Farm Family of the Year in 1963.

In addition to being a wife and mother, Edith managed the farm finances, cultivated award winning flower gardens, planted, picked, harvested, and canned countless fruits and vegetables, prepared a minimum of two large meals per day (often delivering them to the farm field), and served as a reliable volunteer or leader at each of her children's activities.

Whether it was as a Girl Scout Leader (Troop 100), a Mustang Band Mom, or through her engagement with and support of Delta Sigma and DBS, she was a beloved and trusted "other mother" to a generation of young people in St. Francis County.

Avid sports fans, Edith and JB attended every Forrest City Mustang football game, even long after their kids had graduated high school. Razorback season ticket holders for years, they never missed a Razorback football, basketball, or baseball game. In fact, up until the time of her death Edith and her grandsons made it a point to talk before and after every Razorback game, regardless of sport, so that they could fully anticipate and then commiserate over the shoddy officiating. She was also a big fan of the St. Louis Cardinals, before defecting to the Atlanta Braves reasons that still remain a mystery. More puzzling still is why she loved the Miami Dolphins. A fierce table-top competitor in her own right, Edith somehow never summoned the will to gloat about dominating every challenger in dominoes, cards, and Yahtzee.

As busy as her life was, Edith always made time to give back to her community. She and J.B. were active and dedicated members of the Madison United Methodist Church, which they faithfully attended every Sunday morning for as long as they were able. Edith served on the St. Francis County Democratic Committee, was a member of Forrest City Musical

Coterie, was a Red Cross Volunteer, and served for many years as a Pink Lady with the Forrest City Hospital Auxiliary. Her son Randy's battle with terminal cancer made her a staunch advocate for the work of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and its fundraising arm, ALSAC. When she wasn't volunteering, she was at East Arkansas Community College, taking drawing, painting, photography and pottery classes from Peter Haven and enrolling in every course Dr. Ken Mott taught. Or she was sewing, quilting, arranging flowers, or enjoying her extensive library of books, movies and music, all of which were favorite pursuits. When she and J.B. finally retired from farming in 1985, Edith began a second career as a bank teller, first at Planter's Bank and then later at Forrest City Bank. Being a teller allowed her to combine the skills she honed by years of managing the books of their farming operation with her love of people. She truly loved all people (and all animals) unconditionally, and in return, they loved her back. She continued in her role as a teller until J.B.'s late life health issues necessitated her return home, where she cared for him tirelessly until his death in 2005. Her recent years were filled mainly with pets, gardening, cooking, and grandkids. She loved being outside more than anything, and was tooling around on her motorized scooter, inspecting her turnip green patch just two weeks prior to her death. Her life was greatly enriched by her devoted son-in-law, who made sure no need or want went unfilled, and by her extraordinary personal care aids and friends, Bonnie Oates, Teresa Michael, and Carol Fleetwood, who provided companionship, support, and comfort to her over the past three years of her life. Like everyone else who met her, they came to know her as warm, kind, and generous, but tough as nails and quite deserving of the nickname The Warden, given to her by her late husband.

The family greatly appreciates all the individual kindnesses and expressions of concern and support provided over the past week. We

extend special thanks to Edith's personal physicians Dr. Sudesh Banaji and Dr. Pranab Das, whose attentive care provided her an exceptional quality of life over the past six years. We also greatly appreciate Dr. Muhammad Junaid, Dr. Lynette Meece, Tanisha Butler, R.N., and the other wonderful staff at Forrest City Medical Center, where she received outstanding care during the last week of her life.

A private memorial service for family and close friends will be announced at a later date. The family asks that memorials in her name be directed to the Forrest City Public Library, the Forrest City Humane Shelter, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or a charity of the giver's choice.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs Edith I have known you many years and you were one of the sweetest ladies. I enjoyed working with you at Forrest City Bank. You were such a special person and I know that Debra and your family will miss you. Thoughts and prayers to your family
RIP
Debbie Stevens Webb*

Debbie Webb - January 05, 2022 at 07:45 PM

LB

“ *I would like to extend sincere condolences to the family of Mrs. West from the family of Henry Brown. She and Mr. JB were great people. Beautiful family*

Lonte' Winfrey (Brown). Son of Huston Br - December 18, 2021 at 12:18 PM

CG

“ *Mrs Edith was a dear friend of my mom Irene Parkman. Such a wonderful women. This is a beautiful obituary in remembrance of a beautiful person. Good job Debra. Christy parkman Gross*

Christy Gross - December 11, 2021 at 04:32 AM

CC

“ *Let Me Say How Sorry For You Amen.
God Be With Ya, ll At This Hard Time &*



Carol Cummings - December 10, 2021 at 11:51 AM