



Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan

April 10, 1928 - October 2, 2014

Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan, 86 year old resident of Gentry, Arkansas died October 2, 2014 at Willard Walker Hospice Home, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Born April 10, 1928, she was the daughter of James DeKalb Steele and Hettie Walls Steele. Both of her parents died when she was just two years old and she joined the family of Author and Lou Steele. She graduated from Gentry High School where she was the valedictorian of her class. Roberta went to the College of the Ozarks before graduating from the University of Arkansas with a Master's Degree in education. She met and married Orla James Ownbey in 1949, her husband of 60 years. She was a school teacher in area cities in Northwest Arkansas. Roberta was a member of the United Methodist Church of Gentry and co-founder of the Gentry Fine Arts Society. She married Ralph Sullivan in September 2010.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Fred and J.D. Steele, and her first husband, Orla James Ownbey.

She is survived by her husband, Ralph; two sons, Ronald Paul Ownbey and wife Joanne of Russellville, Arkansas and James Steele Ownbey of Gentry; grandchildren, Suzanne Mackey, Kevin Paul Ownbey, Lisa Lynn Kirchner, James "Jay" Ownbey and Samuel Morris Ownbey; and eight great grandchildren.

Graveside services will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, October 11, 2014 at Falling Springs Cemetery, Decatur, Arkansas with Rev. Eric Meyer officiating. There will be a reception following the service at 12:30 p.m. at the Gentry United Methodist Church, Gentry, Arkansas. In lieu of flowers, the family request memorials to be sent to Gentry Public Library, 105 East Main Street, Gentry, 72734 or the Gentry United Methodist Church, 102 Southwest 1st Street, Gentry, 72734.

Cemetery Details

Falling Springs Cemetery

Falling Springs Cemetery
Decatur, AR 72722

Previous Events

Graveside Service

OCT 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Falling Springs Cemetery
Falling Springs Cemetery
Decatur, AR 72722

Tribute Wall

WB

“ Wayne Bookout lit a candle in memory of Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan



Wayne Bookout - October 12, 2014 at 09:18 AM

WB

Ron: We are sorry for your loss. Your whole family is in our prayers

Wayne Bookout - October 12, 2014 at 09:20 AM

JS

“ Ron, Joanne, Suzanne, Kevin and Lisa...I am so sorry to hear of your mother and grandmother's passing. My heart goes out to you at this time and you are all in my thoughts and prayers. Julie.

Julie Shinn-Downes - October 11, 2014 at 07:02 AM

JS

“ Judy Culliton Smith lit a candle in memory of Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan



Judy Culliton Smith - October 10, 2014 at 02:03 PM

BN

“ Berta Jean will be greatly missed. She was a class act and a wonderful friend to my entire family. I will always remember her with fondness and love,

Betsy Babcock Nunn - October 10, 2014 at 09:45 AM

MM

“ Thank you Berta Jean and Orla for opening your home to my family on Thanksgiving day for all those years. You warmly welcomed us to Arkansas and provided us with many memories. Thank you both, and god bless.

Matthew Merced - October 08, 2014 at 09:26 PM

BB

“ Berth Jean is and will always be missed by her Gentry U. M. Church family. We appreciate all she has done for the church through the years. She was a very sweet, kind choir director when we joined in 2001. May God bless and keep you, her beloved family. She is surely already singing in God's choir already. Brenda & W. Terry Bailey

Brenda Bailey - October 08, 2014 at 05:05 PM

CA

“ I only knew Berta for a couple of years but she will be dearly missed. Shared a lot of laughs and smiles with her! God bless you Berta!! Love You!!

Carrine Amos - October 08, 2014 at 03:58 PM

LE

“ Condolences to Ralph Sullivan and family in the death of Roberta. May God grant peace and comfort
Lindsey Edwards

L H Edwards - October 08, 2014 at 02:45 PM

CA

“ *Carrine Amos lit a candle in memory of
Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan*



Carrine Amos - October 08, 2014 at 01:56 PM

JM

“ *John Meeker lit a candle in memory of
Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan*



John Meeker - October 08, 2014 at 10:13 AM

JM

“ I recall the privilege of staying overnight at the Owenby Farm Home. Ron and I were great friends and I felt just as close to Berta Jean and Orla. We also shared a lot of laughs while waiting for the heat to rise through the open air grill in the floor which connected with the rooms below where the heater was located. The trick was to be quiet and good (as always we were) while Berta and Orla maintained constant vigil over our conversations, laughs and giggles. Then, at daybreak each morning Berta would have bacon frying in the skillet and coffee brewing. I have to tell you I don't know the brand of coffee but I know the bacon could named "AWESOME." Berta, Orla, Ron and Jamie always made feel like part of the family. I will never forget those awesome times Ron. I love you as I did back in those wonderful times. Though we have not seen one another or talked in many years; my feelings will always remain the same about each of you in the Owenby family. May God richly bless you with the memories of having the life long blessing of a wonderful upbringing in a little town named Gentry. To all of the Steele family I suffer your loss with you, also without a doubt YOU ALL were greatly appreciated by myself, my entire Meeker family. You performed wonders for all of us through your smiles and greetings each time we darkened your doorways from fountain cokes to compounding meds for our ills and pains; just as you did for the entire Gentry, AR community. I love all of you through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and as life long friends.
AMEN

John Meeker - October 08, 2014 at 10:09 AM

CB

“ I met Berta after joining the staff at Smith Drug, I have had the pleasure of knowing her the last 10 years. We hit it off from the beginning, she was like a grandma to me. It was always a joy to see her and I loved visiting with her. I am saddened by her passing but know that heaven has a WONDERFUL NEW ANGEL , how blessed they are. I love you Miss Berta and will miss you here and look forward to meeting you again. To her family I pray for comfort and strength, God will see you through these difficult days. Love You.

Cheryl Breckenridge - October 07, 2014 at 05:57 PM

MF

“ *Maxine Foster*



maxine foster - October 06, 2014 at 10:29 PM

MS

“ *Berta was teaching business education courses at Springdale High School in 1970 when I started my first teaching job there. Three brand new inexperienced teachers joined her department so she was our "mentor". Even after she and I both moved on in our lives and careers, we remained in contact sharing Christmas cards and occasional phone calls. I feel blessed to have known Berta as she touched my life with kindness and will always remember her compassionate and caring spirit.*

Marlene Samuel - October 06, 2014 at 05:11 PM

CJ

“ There is a song" you can't make old friends" how true. I knew Berta for 54 years, we picked strawberries together, canned, ate berry cobbler and pound cake at the Steele residence many times and made numerous trips to the drugstore for " cherry cokes" Berta was my first friend in Gentry, a talented smart , caring and humble person. Berta loved The Lord, her family, her church, and the community, and truly has been a blessing in my life.. Such good memories!

Carol Jordan - October 05, 2014 at 10:03 PM

DN

“ We thought the world of Berta Jean. She was so dedicated to the Gentry Methodist Church and inspired us as new members. We became life long friends and we will miss her lots. We send our sincere sympathy to her family. Andy and DeNese Newbill

DeNese Newbill - October 04, 2014 at 08:57 PM

BS

“ Berta was such a light in both my life and my husband Al's life. She was Al's typing teacher in his high school days - and his lifelong friend since then. She and I worked together at the newspaper office in the 1980's and 1990's. We became the best of friends and - just like Al - she's been my lifelong friend also. It was always a joy to see here - whether it was in the grocery store, at the library, or at a community event. She loved us and we loved her. Rest in peace my special lady - I'll see you again!

Bev Saunders - October 04, 2014 at 04:23 PM

WB

“ *W. T. & Brenda Bailey lit a candle in memory of Roberta Jeanette Steele Ownbey Sullivan*



W. T. & Brenda Bailey - October 04, 2014 at 04:22 PM

JT

“ *Mrs Owenby was one of my teachers at Gentry High School and tried her best to teach me how to type. She and I have laughed many times about my typing "ability". She once told me I was the worst typist she had ever seen. As an adult we served together at the Methodist Church. I was always impressed with her faith and her willingness to share her faith not only by what she said but by her actions. Over the years she and I had developed a friendship that I will always cherish. We should all desire to live the kind of life she led. Well done Berta Jean....you will be missed. Jim Twiggs*

jim twiggs - October 03, 2014 at 09:34 PM

JK

“ I have good memories of Berta Jean from when I was a child. She saved our home from burning by alerting my Mother to the chimney fire. Not only did she tell Mother the chimney was on fire, she went to our well and started pulling up buckets of water to help put out the fire. That in itself makes a good memory, but she did that in spite of the fact she was deathly afraid of our dog. She just didn't think about herself, she just rushed in to help.

She was also a friend through email after I had left Gentry and she kept me updated on what was happening in my Home Town.

A very nice lady who will be sorely missed by those who knew and loved her.

Ella Jewell Lyons Kee

Ceres CA

Jewell Kee - October 03, 2014 at 08:51 PM