



Edna Louise Sparlin

October 8, 2024

Edna Louise Sparlin passed away on Tuesday, October 8 in Mission, Texas, at the age of 92.

Edna was born on August 6, 1932, in St. Louis, Missouri, the daughter of Louis and Mae Smith. Aside from a short stay in Indiana when Louis was stationed at the Naval Ammunition Depot during World War II, Edna spent her entire childhood on the family homestead in the Grover community of west St. Louis County, which is now part of the town of Wildwood, Missouri. Edna received her early education in a one-room schoolhouse in nearby Pond, Missouri, which is still standing. She later graduated from Eureka High School in Eureka, Missouri.

After graduating high school, Edna attended Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. During a summer break from college, while working behind the Woolworth's lunch counter in Maplewood, Missouri, she met her future husband, Derry Sparlin. While Derry was serving an Army deployment in Japan, Edna finished her bachelor's degree in education, did her student teaching in the new larger school building in Pond, and taught Music and English for a year in Norcatur, Kansas. Edna's strength and determination was particularly apparent during that year in Norcatur, as she made her way alone in that rural outpost without transportation other than a bus she had to flag down after a long walk from town to the main highway. After Derry's return from Japan, Edna left her teaching career to focus on her family. She had one son, Derry Jr. ("Dean"), and two daughters, Lee and

Louise. In 1959, the family moved to Ponca City, Oklahoma. Edna's skills as a mother and homemaker were on full display in those years. She was particularly adept at stretching the family budget, making delicious meals while ensuring that even the smallest scrap of food was never wasted. She put her musical talents to use not only by teaching piano to her children, but also by giving lessons to others in her home. She made sure that her children had the means to pursue whatever activities they could, serving as a Camp Fire Girls leader and supporting their dreams in countless other ways. Edna's later years took her to Lafayette, Louisiana, Houston, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri. She ultimately settled in McAllen to be closer to Lee, also finding the fall and winter weather there more accommodating. Edna's McAllen years were among the happiest of her life, as she found a welcoming home there. Her faith in God was a centerpiece of her life, and she continued to attend weekly church services for as long as she could still drive. She found fulfillment through numerous outlets, including crocheting toys that she happily donated to charity. She also maintained her passion for music, at one point composing an operetta based on the fable of Noah's Ark and directing a church group performance of that work.

Edna was exceedingly comfortable in her own skin. She happily lived alone in a McAllen condominium, explaining to everyone who asked (and some who didn't) that she enjoyed her own company. She maintained her passion for pinching pennies, volunteering to manage the books for her condominium complex for as long as she was able. Her final years were spent at The Bridges at Mission, where she received the physical assistance she needed while retaining her sharp mind until the very end.

Edna is survived by her three children and their spouses: Dean Sparlin (Debbie) of Springfield, Virginia, Lee Fankhauser (Steve) of McAllen, and Louise Dickinson (Jeff Klein) of Rotterdam, New York. Her survivors also include seven grandchildren: Sarah Gibbs (Kevin) of Austin, Texas, Paul Fankhauser of Schenectady, New York, Christopher Sparlin of Springfield, Virginia, William (Catherine) Dickinson of Scotia, New York, Cindy Sparlin of

Watertown, Massachusetts, Joe Dickinson of Rotterdam, New York, and Mark Fankhauser (Stephanie) of McAllen. She is also survived by three great grandchildren: August and Owen Gibbs of Austin, Texas and Samantha Fankhauser of McAllen.

A service to remember Edna's legacy will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 19, at Kreidler Funeral Home in McAllen

Previous Events

Service

OCT **19**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Kreidler Funeral Home, Inc.

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(956) 686-0234

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<http://www.kreidlerfuneralhome.com/index.html>

Tribute Wall

PW

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories*



Petra Wehle - October 19, 2024 at 01:08 AM

PW

“ 1 file added to the album *Edna's crochet animals*



Petra Wehle - October 19, 2024 at 12:56 AM

PW

“ I can't remember if I called Edna “mom” when she and her family first welcomed me into their home in May 1977 after Lee somehow lined things up for me to spend the summer with her at home in Lafayette at the end of our first year in college. To Louise's surprise, she suddenly had both her sister home from college and an extra roommate!

What I remember most, besides all the family fun, is how generous and accepting the family was. Edna easily shared her many interests - I remember singing in the church choir together and hosting Girl Scouts, and she made so much room for me cook and sew (with her machine) to my heart's content. The Sparlins literally changed my life by providing love, kindness, and safety while I was getting oriented as a young adult.

I had the great fortune to visit Edna (and Lee and Louise!) in 2019 after several decades living many states and sometimes continents away. I was so glad to see that all were doing well. And of course, two of Edna's crocheted stuffed animals made their way home with me – a reminder of her resourcefulness and generosity.

I can only hope that when I pass, someone thinks as highly of me as I think of Edna.

--Petra Wipfler Wehle

Petra Wehle - October 19, 2024 at 12:54 AM