



Opal Downing

January 14, 1914 - November 25, 2012

Opal Fern Downing, late of Searcy, Ark., passed away this week following a short illness. She was 98.

She was born Jan. 14, 1914, in Aliceville, Kan., to Homer V. and Mary Etta Hunter Lovitt. She married Charles Daryl Downing on June 2, 1934, in Ottawa, Kan. The couple relocated to Oregon in 1947.

Fern was preceded in death by her husband in 1971, and daughters Donna K. Andreson in 1979 and Rhonda F. Rictor in 2007. Her survivors include sons Daryl Dwayne Downing of Monmouth, and Charles V. Downing of Eugene. Surviving daughters are Mrs. Gary (Judith) Schrieber of Klamath Falls, and Mrs. Jack (Daris) Meier of Searcy. Mrs. Downing also is survived by eight grandsons, nine granddaughters and 36 great-grandchildren.

Opal was the youngest of five children born to Homer and Etta Lovitt, all of whom preceded her in death: Earl Erett Lovitt of Oceanside, Calif.; Pearl May Beard of Portland; Roy Alonzo Lovitt of Wichita, Kan.; and Bertha Faye Long of Gallup, N.M.

Opal was a graduate of Ottawa High School. She was a talented singer and choir member, and often sang for weddings, funerals and public events. At age 30, Fern moved with her young family and eventually settled in Corvallis. There, she managed a bakery for Sunnybrook (and later Burton's) Restaurant for 25 years.

Following her husband's death and her retirement, Fern rededicated herself to her music, serving as the organist for the Missionary Baptist Church in

Corvallis for more than 10 years. In 1985, she relocated to Good Shepherd Retirement Center in Little Rock, Ark. There she organized and managed the center's band, which played for nursing homes and churches. During these latter years, she began writing spiritual poetry that she would recite in her church to a musical accompaniment.

Funeral services for Opal Fern Downing will take place at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, at McHenry Funeral Home in Corvallis. Interment will follow at Oaklawn Memorial Park.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the Missionary Baptist Seminary, 5224 Stagecoach Road, Little Rock, AR 72204.

Tribute Wall



“ *Love and miss you, Grandma. I'll see you in Heaven. Rock Morgan and Taylor for me...* ”

Tara Johnson - November 30, 2012 at 12:12 PM