



## Gay Wheat

April 18, 1928 - November 18, 2020

Our wonderful mother went into the presence of her wonderful Savior Wednesday at dawn on November 18, 2020. She left from home, as she had desired, with family attending. We are blessed.

Gay was born Dorothy Gay to Vaden N. and Frances Sims Slifer on April 18, 1928 in Stuttgart, Arkansas. She was buried in Lonoke on Friday, November 20.

There were seasons of her life, as there are for all of us.

Gay grew up in Lonoke, Arkansas, and graduated from Lonoke High School in 1946. That fall, she took a train to Fulton, Missouri, where she matriculated at William Woods, then an all-women's college. Graduating from their two-year degree program, she returned to Lonoke. Her former high school English teacher, Mrs. Wheat, played matchmaker for her son, Edward. Ed and Gay Wheat married in September, 1948, in Lonoke and honeymooned one night at the Peabody in Memphis. Ed, with Gay, then returned to Little Rock to complete his medical degree in family practice. Gay worked in the administrator's office, among her other tasks, typing 100 wpm, without error, on a manual typewriter, mind you! Ed, as student, and Gay, working on campus, were eligible for the twenty-five cent cafeteria lunch. For supper, they each had a pint of ice cream.

Graduating in 1952, Ed, Gay and firstborn daughter, Melinda Gay, moved to Springdale, allowing them an escape from Lonoke's legendary swarms of "Piper Cub-sized" mosquitoes and the DDT sprayed as a control measure. Springdale's doctors were pleading for help with their patient load during the Polio epidemic of the time. Ed contracted Polio twice, requiring hospitalization. Polio came home with him and infected daughter, Joy Frances, born in 1953. For her, there were surgeries, casts, and a leg brace in her early years. At about one year, third daughter, Merry Ann, born in 1955, was diagnosed with hip dysplasia, necessitating surgeries, traction, then a cast from the waist down for months. Mother had her hands full!!

During this time, Ed got his pilot's license, as did Gay-- so she could bring the plane down if the unexpected occurred with Ed piloting. Ever practical and prepared, our Mother was.

Gay had the gift of hospitality, warmly welcoming family and friends into their home. In the early '60's, Ed and Gay thoughtfully designed and built their dream home on Circle Drive.

In all of this, the primary thing about our mother became her faith. Ed and Gay were in their late 30's when a new season of spiritual awakening took place. Mother followed Daddy into the realization that it was necessary to individually acknowledge and accept that Christ's cross work covers the penalty God exacts for our own innate, selfish, sinful nature's actions, attitudes, and intentions. Doing so, removes that barrier of sin between man and God, allowing one to enter into a personal, God-directed life on this earth and is the only path into His presence at death. "These things are written....that you may KNOW that you have eternal life...." I John 5:13a

As their faith walk developed through studying the Scriptures and praying together, opportunities opened to treat Ed's patients' physical and spiritual

needs. Also, God began to lead them to emphasize Biblical principles that create loving, lasting Christian marriages. This brought a new season of traveling, speaking, co-authoring best-selling Christian books and audio materials and also requests to have these translated into many languages and circulated around the globe.

As they will, seasons change. A new ministry of caregiving began. Ed's father (from Lonoke) moved into their home. Gay's mother, Frances Robins, had moved to Springdale from Little Rock and required more of their help. Sadly, Gay's beloved Ed began to exhibit the family scourge of Alzheimer's. She was juggling all 3. Again, her hands were full. However, this time she had her faith to strengthen and sustain her and much prayer support from family and friends. Each loved one died in succession. Her Ed died the week of the 9/11 attacks.

Thus began a new season of widowhood lasting 19 years. Mother remained steadfast in her commitments and callings. We counted on her to faithfully pray daily and specifically for each family member by name - all 34 of us. She continued to study God's Word and hosted a weekly Bible class in her home into this past March. She continued to take counseling calls from around the world. She was faithful to attend and support the endeavors of Fellowship Bible Church of Springdale. Always, Mother remained gracious and grateful. We are blessed.

A special word of recognition is due our caregiver, Araceli Munoz, who loved and cared for our precious mother as her own. The Lord sent you. We are grateful.

Those who have gone before:

Husband, Marcus Edward "Ed" Wheat, Jr., M.D. (in 2001),

an infant grandson, Jonathan Edward Mason (in 1975),  
and daughter, Merry Ann Peoples (June 27, 2020).

Those who remain:

Melinda Mason and, husband Sam, of Springdale and 3 children; Christina Domer and husband Damon, and children, Samuel and Abigail of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Carrie Rogers and husband Lucas and children, Gabriel, Jude, Eli, and Eleanor of Plano, Texas, and Marcus Mason and wife Kara and children, Aubrey and Braden of Tontitown.

Joy Shoemaker and husband Rick and 7 children: Richard Shoemaker and wife Julianna and their 3 children, Ivy, Malachi, and Samantha, and Elizabeth of Oklahoma City, Michael of Tulsa, John of Mexico, Julie of Dallas, and Joseph and Victoria, both of Tulsa.

Son-in-law, Rusty Peoples of Barling and son, Ray and wife Abbi and sons, Graham and Owen of Shawnee, Kansas.

- Melinda Wheat Mason

# Previous Events

## Burial

NOV **20**. 1:00 PM.

Lonoke Cemetery

# Tribute Wall



“ *Gay Wheat*

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January 21, 2023 at 02:29 PM



“ *Melinda, I am sad for the loss of your mother here on this earth, but I know your faith is undeniable....I know you are at peace about seeing your mother and father and sister again one day for eternity... And they are reunited now ... They were instrumental in my life, believe it or not, and I didn't really know it until I was older and remembered how strong their faith was in our Lord. It was a true witness to me....I remember really enjoying your mother's company when I was there to visit ... God's Blessings on you and Sam and your family ... and He is faithful....  
Salle Schoeffler Dent*

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**Salle Dent** - December 07, 2020 at 02:18 PM



“ *Sweet lady ,she has been our neighbor for 11 years always remember seeing her drive up and waving with that smile she will be missed  
Our condolences for your loss*

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**Kyle Bartz** - November 27, 2020 at 05:40 PM

DC

“ *Melinda and family,  
So sorry for the loss of a wonderful woman. I just spoke to your Mom, the beloved Mrs Wheat about 3-4 wks ago. We spoke of seeing each other when this pandemic was over. She spoke about her doctor asking her about ordering more PT. She told him NO, that I had taught her the exs and all she had to do was do them. I have driven by the house that is now dark and worried about her. As a child, my parents would drive down her street to look at the best decorated street in town. My father even rang the door late one night to ask your Dad to turn on the light so myself and twin sister could sit in Santa's sleigh and get our pics taken. Your father and mother gratefully obliged. I brought by the pic that was taken that night, your Mom couldn't believe it!!! Much sympathy and condolences go to you on the passing of a wonderful, joyous Lady!!!!!!  
Debbie Coan*

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**Debbie Coan** - November 26, 2020 at 11:07 PM

LC

“ *I remember her from the Springdale rec center. She was a very nice woman.*

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**Linda Christy** - November 26, 2020 at 10:38 PM

DF

“ *my mom and i were talking about gay.i told her about her passing.we loved gay and her mom.my mom and brothers used to mow l the lawn for gays mom up until she died.gay was a very sweet lady. my mom would always bring gay a pumoin cake roll for thanksgiving and christmas.she will be truly missed and loved.debbie(wheeler) forkner and the wheeler family. sandi rick and monte wheeler*



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**debbie forkner** - November 26, 2020 at 03:59 PM

RH

“ I REMEMBER WELL THE TIME SHE SAID, NO MORE NEW PATIENTS. THEY WERE BOTH LOVED HERE. THEY WILL RECEIVE CROWNS LOADED WITH STARS, REWARDS FOR BELIEVING IN THE HEALING POWER GIVEN BY. G O D...TO HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS HERE ON HIS PLANET. E A R T H .

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**RONDELL HARRISON** - November 26, 2020 at 11:24 AM

SW

“ *Melinda (and Sam) - I am so sorry to learn of your mother's passing but am grateful you shared so many wonderful things she and your father did for others on this earth. We certainly need more Christians like them in today's world. I shall be praying for your peace - that only Christ can give us - in the days ahead. Rest assured your mother and father touched so many people in a positive way (as you have expressed in your mother's obituary). I know Heaven has gained a great person.*

*Sam Wilson*

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**Sam Wilson** - November 26, 2020 at 04:29 AM

AH

“ *Melinda, Sam and family, we extend our most sincere condolences to each of you praying God's comfort and strength during your time of grief. What a beautiful tribute for your mother, a life well lived and living still in the presence of our Savior.*

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**Anna Harp** - November 25, 2020 at 03:03 PM

LT

“ *Melinda, Sam and family, We are saddened to hear of your beloved Mother's passing. She lived her faith with good cheer and was such a sweet person. So very sorry for your loss. Linda and Larry Taylor*

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**Linda Taylor** - November 25, 2020 at 11:34 AM

DB

“ *To the family of Gay Wheat.....I didn't know your mom or any of you but I read her obituary. She sounded like an AWESOME mom. May you be BLESSED with all of her memories. I'm sorry for your loss.....God Bless you.....Diane Bennett*

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**Diane Bennett** - November 25, 2020 at 11:19 AM

KL

*Melinda I am so sorry for your loss. I know you will miss her a lot. I miss my mom everyday. I am always thinking of something I need to ask her. You are in my prayers*

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**Kay Lynn looney** - November 25, 2020 at 12:50 PM

TC

“ *Dr. Wheat delivered my husband and I (2 years apart). I remember Springdale High School having a measles outbreak in 1987, and when I went to his office to get my shot, he had our wedding picture in my chart. My mom worked for Harps for 32 years and was good friends with Mrs. Wheat, which I had the pleasure of meeting her. She was such an amazing lady and so friendly. I remember she gave me a big ole hug right in the grocery store. I'm sad for her loved ones pain here on earth, but oh the JOY her heavenly family must feel. She will be missed so much. Rest in sweet peace.*

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**Tonya Craine** - November 25, 2020 at 09:11 AM

KY

“ We have been so enriched to have known Dr. Ed & Gay Wheat. They began as our doctors, but they made their patients feel like friends and family. The first time that our family was guest in their home, Gay told us to come. We were hesitant due to the beautiful, white carpet, to which Gay said promptly, "Get in here...carpet is made to be replaced". She was full of love and hospitality. Not only did Dr. Wheat deliver my sister and me when we were born, but Dr. Ed & Gay came to my sister's wedding reception/celebration. They were such a wonderful surprise. We hate to hear of Gay's passing, but heaven is truly sweeter with her there.

Sincerely,

Kelly Yarbrough & Renee (Yarbrough) Terry

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**Kelly Yarbrough** - November 24, 2020 at 04:51 PM