



# Carolyn Sue Thornton

JUL 22, 1945 - OCT 21, 2024



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Bixby-South  
Tulsa Funeral Service  
& Crematory

# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Events</b> .....	Page 5
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 6



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**M**rs. Carolyn Sue Thornton, lovingly known as "Grandma T" to her grandchildren, passed away peacefully October 21, 2024, at the age of 79. Born July 22, 1945, in Clinton, Missouri to Isaac Daniel Briggs and Mary Elizabeth (Lee) Briggs. She grew up in Clinton, a city marked by the profound loss of her father, who was killed in WWII when her mother was pregnant with her. She was raised alongside her beloved older sister, Jacqueline Claudia Briggs, and despite these early hardships, her resilience and strength were evident from a young age.

Shortly after graduating high school, she married her childhood sweetheart, Stephen Thornton, and together they moved to Warrensburg, Missouri, where she attended Central Missouri State College. She impressively completed her degree in just three years, while also giving birth to her first child. At the age of 20, she signed her first teaching contract, embarking on a remarkable career in education that spanned more than 34 years in public education and 11 years in private school settings in Clinton, Missouri. Even after officially retiring, her passion for teaching continued as she substituted for eight years following her move to Bixby, Oklahoma.

Teaching wasn't just a profession for her, it was a calling. She was devoted to the growth and education of countless children and was cherished by students and colleagues alike for her warmth, dedication, and creativity. In addition to her time in the classroom, she was involved in numerous projects that reflected her many talents, including macramé, stitching, and genealogy. She even joined the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in Missouri, later transferring her membership to the local Bixby chapter. Always busy, she loved to coupon, create handmade gifts, and craft personalized vests for loved ones.

Her life in Clinton was filled with love, family, and community involvement. She and her husband made Clinton their home, where they raised their children and spent time contributing to the local community.



## Obituary

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She was a devoted member of New Beginnings Church in Bixby, where her faith, warmth, and desire to help others shone through. A true "doer and helper," she formed many close friendships through her involvement in church and community activities. Despite battling illness and a tumor diagnosis in March 2023, her spirit and love for others never wavered. She received compassionate care at the Oklahoma Cancer Center, and her family is grateful for the support they received during this time.

She is survived by her loving children: her son, Tim Thornton and his wife Donna of Mustang, Oklahoma, along with their daughters Mackenzie Marie McClain and her husband Garin of Edmond, Oklahoma, and Meredith Michelle DeGarmo and her husband Dillon of Houston, Texas; and her daughter, Natalie Sue Armstrong and her husband Lyle of Sullivan, Missouri, along with their children, Mitchell and wife Emily, and Cameron. She was also a proud great-grandmother to Eloise DeGarmo, twins Charlotte and Isaac, and Briggs McClain. Her family was the center of her world, and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren brought her immeasurable joy.

Her love for family, friends, and the many communities she served leaves a lasting legacy. She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her, but her love and spirit live on in the hearts of those she touched.

A celebration of her life will be held at 11am Thursday, October 24, 2024 at New Beginnings Church. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her honor to Clarehouse, 7617 S Mingo Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133.





## Events

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### Celebration

 **Thursday**, October 24, 2024

 11:00 AM CT

 New Beginnings Church



## Tribute Wall

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LL

**Lisa Lee** posted:

Mrs. Thornton was a very special educator. Her excellence in the classroom was evident in her students success and her commitment to her students went far beyond the time spent in class. My daughter was fortunate to have Mrs. Thornton as a 3rd and 4th grade teacher at CCA. Mrs. T remained invested in her life through college and adulthood. She wrote to her and attended some college cross country events. She clipped newspaper articles about TU cross country and track and sent them to me. She became a mentor to my daughter, encouraging her to follow God's plan. I will always be grateful to this special teacher and the impact she had on my daughter and so many other students. Oh what a legacy she has left behind!

October 25 at 10:47 AM

DW

**Dorothy Warren** posted:

Carolyn was the sweetest person. I am one of her Missouri cousins. She worked so much to research our ancestors for DAR. She was our Sell reunion historian. She will be missed by many. Rest in peace dear Carolyn.

October 24 at 9:40 AM

JT

**Jaimie R Tollison** posted:

Carolyn sent me special postcards every month and holidays for years. I loved getting them in the mail and I tried to always respond with a long rambling letter. She was strong, determined and very kind. I will miss her so much.

October 24 at 8:10 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Karen Kimbrell** posted:

Carolyn was the sweetest, dearest and best friend a person could ever have and I thank God for making us spiritual sisters as well. I miss you old friend. I'm so glad you are no longer in pain. I will see you again in glory. Make room for me in the alto section! I love you! ❤️

October 22 at 10:19 AM



**Shirley Zeiler** October 25 at 3:49 PM

What a blessing Carolyn was in my and many people's lives. I am blessed that God placed our lives on the same path. She is missed! I am praying her family finds joy in knowing what joy she brought to all whose lives she touched. See you some day.



**Janice Mcewan** October 23 at 9:37 AM

Carolyn was an amazing, creative and dedicated teacher. . Enjoyed her creative sewing talents with the festive vests many of us wore at Southeast Elementary. She will be missed.



**Pamela Williams** October 22 at 5:24 PM

Thank you Mrs T for your love for Jesus and His word. We will miss you dearly. Thank you also for loving my Nancy like your own granddaughter! We will see you again! †



## Tribute Wall

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**Karen Kimbrell** lit a candle in honor of Carolyn.



October 22 at 10:13 AM



**Jeff Lowe** November 13 at 9:56 AM

Mrs. Thornton was one of the most influential people in my life. Her professionalism, consistency, and faithfulness to both the Lord and her profession were unwavering. When we touched base with Carolyn to let her know we were starting a Christian school, she said, "I'll go ahead and turn in my resignation," and never flinched. She didn't know where the new school was going to be, how much she was going to be paid, what grade she was going to teach, or any other details. I have reflected on that moment many times over the last 25 years, and it always provided me with resolve to move forward with whatever obstacle I was facing. It was like I owed it to her. The amazing thing is I'm just one of many who were impacted so greatly by Carolyn's influence. My children were also impacted. What an inspiring example of a good and faithful service.



**Vaughn Hart** October 23 at 3:26 AM

Carolyn was a special friend. We went through all stages of elementary, junior high and high school together. We both played in band together and marched in countless parades together. These are a few of the memories I cherish of her. Carolyn's dedication to educating youth is one of her crowning assets. She will be missed by all those she touched throughout her lifetime. Always save a space at the table of remembrance for our departed loved ones. Vaughn Hart (Sedalia, MO)



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Carolyn by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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