



## Shirley Ann Gardner Franklin

January 14, 1931 - March 18, 2026

Shirley Ann Gardner Franklin, 95, was welcomed into Jesus' arms on March 18, 2026, and a hearty alto voice has been added to the heavenly choir. Suffering from dementia, she fell two days prior and suffered internal injuries. At Holmes Regional Hospital in Melbourne, FL, she fell into a deep sleep and passed away peacefully.

Born January 14, 1931, in Binghamton, NY, Shirley was a daughter of the late Frederick and Dorothy (Nesmith) Gardner. In her childhood, the family moved to Towanda, PA. Upon entering Towanda High School, she met E. Dean Franklin, and they became true high school sweethearts. Dean and Shirley were married on April 18, 1950 and started a dairy farm in the Orwell Hill area. The couple's four children, Tim, Susie, Becky, and Julie, were all born in the 1950's.

Shirley was no stranger to hard work, was persevering, and was focused on the task at hand. She loved to garden and tend the outside landscape. She was also a great cook and baker; her chicken gravy and homemade biscuits with elderberry jelly were unrivaled, along with melt-in-your-mouth sugar cookies, Christmas Swedish tea rings, and delicious potato salad. The children were expected to be involved in household and farm tasks, and though Shirley manned a "tight ship" ...behind it all was a great sense of humor.

In 1960, Dean sold the dairy herd and became a full-time insurance agent, and Shirley and family adjusted to his career change. He continued his

business until May 29, 1979, when his life was cut short by a head-on collision of a drunken driver. Shirley's life was forever changed, but her strong belief in God's sovereignty gave her the strength to carry on as a young widow of 48 years old. A verse she quoted often reflected her faith: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28 NIV). Instead of giving up, she bravely carried on and became even more involved in her church and community.

Shirley had always been an avid reader but now began to earnestly study the Bible and teach ladies, both in neighborhood studies and in larger church classes. She was well known for her creative overhead transparencies, which were "cutting edge" in the 70's. In 1983, she became involved in planning an annual ladies' retreat at Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, PA with co-director Linda Strain and came up with the name Ladies LYFE (Living Your Faith Everyday). They developed and carried out a wonderful tradition that is continuing to this day.

Travel was a passion that Shirley developed as well, and in addition to trips to Scotland, Israel, Austria and Bermuda, she began to spend the late fall and winter seasons in Merritt Island, FL. She drove back and forth every fall and spring until her early 80's, when the family convinced her it would be best to fly.

Out of all her interests, Shirley especially loved outdoor activities. She planted many gladiola bulbs each spring, resulting in an outdoor bonanza of multi-colored "glads" to share. And her iconic smile lit up her face when she operated her Zero Turn lawn mower on her acreage, until at age 91, when she moved in full-time with Julie in 2022.

Surviving are son, Timothy B. Franklin (Noknoi) of Wysox, PA; and daughters, Carol Sue Brock (Fred) of Bradenton, FL, Rebecca Hauser (Leland, deceased) of Wysox, PA, and Julia Houser (George Gordon) of Merritt Island, FL; grandsons, Tilden Franklin (Angelica) and Darren Hauser (Brittany); granddaughters, Sunisa Masi (Michael), Deanna Rees (Lucas), Lynn Kesten

(Donald), Heidi Houser, Rachel Rockwell (Justin), Jill Houser (Christian Sandberg ), Cindi Smith (Evan), and Suzy Gardner (Patrick); twelve great-grandchildren; one brother, David Gardner (Kathy) of McDonough, GA; two sisters, Joan Cooley (Vern, deceased) of Towanda, PA and Sharon White (Stanley) of Simpsonville, SC; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by stepmother, Lila Gardner; brother, Robert Gardner; sister, Barbara Oakley; and several brothers and sisters in law.

Private interment was held at Bradford County Memorial Park, Luthers Mills, PA where Shirley was placed beside her beloved Dean. A Memorial Service will be held at the Independent Baptist Church, Towanda, Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Donn Hauser officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the church. The family expresses deep gratitude to Julie, Gordon, and Heidi Houser for their selfless care of Shirley during these last years. The family suggests that contributions be directed to Ladies Missionary Fellowship c/o Independent Baptist Church, 109 Cherry Street, Towanda, PA 18848 in memory of Shirley G. Franklin.

Memories and condolences may be expressed by visiting [www.bowenfuneralhomes.com](http://www.bowenfuneralhomes.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Bradford County Memorial Park

20452 Route 6  
Towanda, PA 18848

# Previous Events

## Receive Friends

JUN 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

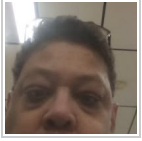
Independent Baptist Church  
109 Cherry Street  
Towanda, PA 18848

## Service

JUN 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Independent Baptist Church  
109 Cherry Street  
Towanda, PA 18848

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dear Tim and tilden*

*My thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family at this difficult time.*

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**Michelle Bull** - March 27 at 01:39 PM