



Mrs. Leola Inez Willard

August 1, 1924 - November 22, 2022

Born Leola Inez Zumwalt in Blevins Arkansas on August 1, 1924, the 4th of 7 children born to Carl and Hilda Zumwalt. She married the love of her life Leo Willard on December 15, 1946, after he returned from captivity as a Prisoner of War in Germany during WWII. As she would often share with others that was the day her life began. She was a devoted wife, Mother and a true homemaker before the word had a definition. Leola was a talented cook and seamstress who hand-crafted everything from Barbie clothes to pageant gowns for Miss Texas and Miss Washington.

Her husband was called into ministry and became a Baptist minister who led Congregations from Texas to Washington state. Brother Leo and Sister Leola were known throughout the Missionary Baptist Community as leaders with a heart for God and a love for people. They passed on an undying faith to all their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and everyone who met them.

After her beloved husband passed away in 1986, she devoted her life to her children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. She never missed a wedding or baby shower within 2000 miles! She became an avid traveler exploring the world fearlessly with her loving niece and travel partner, Ramona Venable. From paragliding in New Zealand to snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, making curtains for an orphanage while in Taiwan, sleeping on deck of a ferry bound for Alaska, and Kissing the Blarney Stone in Ireland with unbridled passion. Wherever she went Leola made a lasting impact on

anyone who crossed her path. In 1988 she moved to Walla Walla, Washington to be closer to her daughter and son.

In 2020 at 95 she survived a severe stroke and experienced a recovery described as nothing short of a miracle. She lost her communication that day but not her impact. Her stories were embedded in the hearts and minds of her children and grandchildren.

As a widow of a proud veteran and POW she was welcomed with US flags and open arms in 2021 at the Walla Walla Veterans Home where she quietly went to meet her Lord and Savior on November 22, 2022. She is once again telling stories with delight next to the love of her life Leo and her daughter, Judy.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Leo Willard. Daughter, Judy Perry, Siblings; Louise, Helen, Coy, and William Roy.

She is survived by her daughter, Teresa and Tom Piefer and son Jim and Patricia Willard of Walla Walla and son Gerald Willard of Lufkin, Texas; siblings, Glendene Venable, and Henry Zumwalt; grandchildren, Gerald Jr Willard, John Willard, Karen Willard, Kathy Martin, Tim Perry, Michael Willard, Bobby Perry, Debbie Grady, Becky Schwartz, Christina Tapp, Craig Piefer, and Heather Ashbeck; multiple great grandchildren and even 5 great great grandchildren.

The funeral will be held, and her life celebrated at Hawthorn Funeral Home Chapel in Carthage, Texas, Friday, December 2, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Burial will follow in the Langley Cemetery under the direction of Hawthorn Funeral Home.

Cemetery Details

Langley Cemetery

2548 FM 124 East
Beckville, TX 75631

Previous Events

Funeral Service

DEC 2. 10:00 AM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home Chapel
307 W Wellington St.
Carthage, Tx

Tribute Wall



“ 212 files added to the album LifeTributes



Hawthorn Funeral Home - December 02, 2022 at 10:39 AM

RN

“ Mrs. Willard aka "Roadrunner" was a delight and a treasure. She was one of the most positive minded persons I have ever known always giving God the glory for all things good and not so good. I will always cherish the time she and I walked 10 miles for the Walk of Faith in my country community. It took us a while but what a wonderful visit we had. Among life stories, she pointed out every tree, bush, flower and weed, delighted in the uniqueness of each as only our creator could do. Rest sweet in Jesus til we meet again.
Renee Nolen

" His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25:21

Renee Nolen - December 02, 2022 at 10:24 AM

JD

“ Love and prayers to each of you. Jerry Don and Pat (Edens) Dorman
Isaiah 40:31



Jerry Don and Pat E Dorman - November 30, 2022 at 09:54 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Leola Inez Willard.



November 30, 2022 at 05:21 PM

SC

“ Many times many years ago I visited with her when she lived near Antioch community and listened to her detailed stories of her travels and adventures with enthusiasm. She always added her desire to have made those trips with Leo. One time she was visiting and asked me to take her to visit Alene Watson in Beckville. We were going around a curve in the Antioch community and a semi truck driver lost control and the trailer started leaning toward my lane. I drove under it as it leaned. Leola and I both called on the Lord to protect us. I quickly swerved to the right, hit a shallow ditch and slammed on the brakes. We both realized we were still alive and grabbed each other and held on tight. We immediately praised the Lord, thanking Him for His protection. We both knew God had more for us to do on this earth. I always looked for her at the BMAA meetings. I will always treasure her friendship.

Sharon Cole - November 29, 2022 at 10:41 PM