



In Memoriam

Barbara J. Benton
Past Most Worthy Grand Matron
General Grand Chapter
Past Grand Matron
Oklahoma Grand Chapter
Order of the Eastern Star



Once again the Golden Chain of our Grand Chapter has been broken with the passing of another precious link, Sister Barbara J. Benton, Past Most Worthy Grand Matron, General Grand Chapter, Oklahoma's Past Grand Matron. Sister Barbara was born April 4, 1930 in Hugo, OK to the late Jack and Pearl Spring. She passed from this life November 27, 2021 at the age of 91.

Barbara, a Choctaw native, grew up in Pauls Valley, OK. After high school, Barbara graduated with a business degree from the (then named) Oklahoma College for Women in Chickasha, OK where she was honored during 2019's Women's History Month as a notable alumni who has gone on to do great things.

Barbara married her childhood sweetheart, Travis Goggans in 1950 and they were blessed with their only child, Paula Sue, after moving back to Norman, OK from Roswell, New Mexico, in 1954. She managed and instructed at Barbara's Dance Studio for over 27 years. She was an active charter member of St. Stephens United Methodist Church in Norman. In 1975, Barbara married Thomas Hart. Benton and they traveled the OES world together. Tom and Barbara were married for 43 years when he passed away in 2018.

Barbara is survived by her children, Paula Fernandez of Kingston, OK, Thomas Benton of Norman and Barbara Jones (Ty) of Oklahoma City. Grandchildren: Will Fernandez (Jeri Kay) of Norman, Travis Fernandez of Indianapolis, IN, Alana Barney (Bobby) of Sacramento, CA. and Ginger Benton of Norman.

Sister Barbara was a 66 year member of Eastern Star, initiated in Norman Chapter, June 7, 1955, and was a Perpetual Member since 1999. She served as Grand Ruth in 1976 with the "Lamplighter and Flames" Grand Family, Lola Lane, WGM and Harley Kirkland, WGP. She was elected to the position of Associate Grand Conductress in 1981 and served with the "Anchors", Lea Courtney, WGM and Leo Nelson, WGP. In 1982 she was Grand Conductress with the "Apple Blossoms" Grand Family, Mary McCain, WGM and Roy Shonk, WGP and in 1983, she served as Associate Grand Matron with the "Starlites", Betty Fisher, WGM and Jesse H. Burns, WGP. Barbara served as Worthy Grand Matron with Eugene Schutkesting, Worthy Grand Patron, and the "Tribe of '84" Grand Family at the 76th "Council Fires" Annual Session of Oklahoma Grand Chapter, October 1984.

Barbara's service to General Grand Chapter began as she served as a General Grand Chapter Committee Member, "Our Wonderful World of Youth" in 1985. She was elected and served as a Right Worthy Grand Trustee 1991-1997. She served as Right Worthy Associate Grand Conductress 1997-2000. In the 2000-2003 Triennium she served as Right Worthy Grand Conductress and as Right Worthy Associate Grand Matron in 2003-2006. Then in 2006, Barbara's dream came true, she was elected and installed as Most Worthy Grand Matron and served with William E. Owen, Most Worthy Grand Patron, with the "Star Tribe" in the "Choctaw" Triennium 2006-2009. The 46th Triennial Assembly "Council Fires" was held in Tulsa, Oct. 30 – Nov. 5, 2009, with the Eastern Star World in attendance.

As a member of the Choctaw Nation, her Native American Heritage was a source of pride as witnessed by the presentation in every Grand Jurisdiction of General Grand Chapter of the Oklahoma and Choctaw Nation Flags when she was MWGM. Her colors, emblems, music, flowers and her aim "To Seek Guidance from the Great Spirit Above" reflected her Native spirit. Her love for the members was evident in her willingness to bless us with the "Lord's Prayer" in Choctaw Sign Language. We will always remember fondly her Choctaw greeting, "Chick-chick-ama" (Good Evening) at our meetings.

From a reading at her Memorial Service, December 4, 2021 at 1:00 P.M. at the St. Stephen's United Methodist Church in Norman.

*Whose voice I hear in the winds, whose breath gives life to all, hear me, I pray.
I am small and weak; I need Your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make me wise, so that I understand the things You have taught my people.
Let me learn the lessons.
Make me always ready to come to You with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades as the fading sunset,
My spirit may come to You.*

Please remember the Choctaw phrase Barbara would say to finish her wonderful speeches:
EIHONEYSJ (E I HON E S J) "Until We Meet Again"

We extend our deepest sympathy to Barbara's family, friends, Norman Chapter, the "Tribe of 84" and the "Lamplighters and Flames" Grand Families and the "Star Tribe" General Grand Chapter Family. In loving remembrance of our departed, Past Most Worthy Grand Matron, Past Grand Matron of OK please read this Memorial and drape the Altar at the first meeting after its receipt.



Anita Jo Johnson
Worthy Grand Matron



Gerald R. Stegall
Worthy Grand Patron



Leatrice Massey
Grand Secretary