



## Fern (Pendergraft) Vanpool

December 13, 1919 - July 3, 2015

Fern Pendergraft Vanpool, age 95 and widow of George D. Vanpool, died on July 3, 2015, in Miami, OK, following a broken hip. She was born December 13, 1919, on the family farm three miles east of Miami, OK. She was the daughter of Thomas Audus Richard Pendergraft and Mamie Josephine Buttram Pendergraft, who in 1914 had moved to Ottawa County by wagon and buggy from McDonald County, MO.

Fern attended the one-room Long View School, also known as the Yellow Dog School, from grades one through eight. After completing the eighth grade, she enrolled in Miami High School, graduating with the Miami High School class of 1936 when she was age 16. Fern and her mother attended the Elm Creek Sunday School, a rural non-denominational Elm Creek Sunday School which was formed before 1900 to provide a place of worship for the local farming community. It was there that she met her future husband.

On December 4, 1937, when Fern was age 17 and George Vanpool was age 20, they were married by long-time family friend Elder Frank Kaiser, a local grocer and LDS minister, at his home in Miami, OK. The couple rented land known as the O. W. Brown place northeast of Miami. Fern's parents had given them one cow as a wedding gift, and George's parents had given two cows and one horse, and they immediately began farming, raising chickens, gardening and milking cows. After two years they welcomed the first of their

five children.

In 1942 they rented a second farm known as the Sullivan place, located two miles south of Quapaw. In 1947, Fern and George bought the home and land from the Alfonso Greenback estate.

George and his parents were members of the First Christian Church in Miami, and after her marriage Fern joined George's church. She and George also attended the Elm Creek Sunday School.

Early in her marriage Fern joined the Ottawa County Home Demonstration Club. The organization emphasized homemaking skills, and they had a large presence at the county fair. Fern's entries often won blue ribbons, and she was still entering winning exhibits in jelly making and pie baking at last fall's fair, in 2014. In April 2015 she received a certificate honoring her for 69 years of continuous membership in what is now named Oklahoma Home and Community Education, Inc.

As her children grew, Fern became active in 4-H Club work and helped them with speeches, demonstrations, and talent shows. At an awards ceremony in 1963 in Stillwater, she was named Outstanding 4-H Club Leader for the State of Oklahoma.

Fern was a devoted keeper of family history. She co-authored two family history books, and provided information to numerous other authors who were compiling family histories. She was also active in the Pilot Club, the Miami Travel Club, the Ottawa County Historical Society, and served as a docent at the Dobson Museum.

Fern was deeply patriotic and had a tall flag pole erected in her yard, where one could always see the United States Flag flying high above her house. She

was a charter member of the Asa Alexander chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, served as DAR Chaplain for the State of Oklahoma, and attended the DAR Continental Congress in Washington, DC. For many years Fern coordinated the DAR American History Essay Contest for high school students in Ottawa County by recruiting students, collecting the essays, arranging for judges for the contest, and then presenting awards during assemblies at each high school in the county. She was also a charter member of William McBride chapter of the United States Daughters of the War of 1812.

In 1979 George retired from farming and they built a retirement home on property located only one-half mile from the home in which Fern was born. Fern and George were able to travel, and they took trips to the Holy Land, Germany, France, Hawaii, England, Canada, Mexico, Scotland, New Zealand and Australia.

George died on July 1, 2002, as a result of an automobile accident. After his death Fern transferred her membership to the First Methodist Church in Miami, where she was a member of the Tuesday Morning Prayer Group and completed the Disciple 1 Bible Study.

Fern was deeply committed to the Elm Creek Sunday School, and upon its closure in 2012, she wrote "The History of the Elm Creek Sunday School," which was published as a feature article in the Miami News Record on February 5, 2013.

Fern is survived by four children: Mary Fern Souder (Wallace) of Overland Park, KS, John Vanpool of Phoenix, AZ, Darrell Vanpool (Paula) of Miami, OK, and Virginia Knapp (James) of Ord, NE. She is also survived by eleven grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren: Katherine Souder Burkhart (Kelly) and children Christian, Sally and Maren Burkhart of Lenexa, KS; William

Souder (Elizabeth) and children Emily, Abigail, Jack and Benjamin Souder of Overland Park, KS; Fred Souder (Jana) and daughter Olivia Souder of Overland Park, KS; David Vanpool of Houston, TX; Paul Vanpool of the Mid-East; Justice Vanpool of California; Karger Vanpool and children Grace, Wesley, Elizabeth and Lily Vanpool of Midlothian, TX; Davies Vanpool (Julie) and children Grant, Trevor, Zachary and Peyton Vanpool of Langley, OK; Kristina Knapp Spears (Lane) and children Caroline, Preston and Katherine Spears of Dallas, TX; Gabriel Knapp of Dallas, TX; and Megan Knapp of New York City, NY.

Fern was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, a stillborn twin daughter, Catherine Sue Vanpool, a grandson, Nathan William Vanpool, and two brothers, Lloyd Pendergraft and Hugh Pendergraft.

Visitation will be Tuesday, July 7, from 6 to 8 PM at the Brown-Winters Funeral Home in Miami. A celebration of the life of Fern Pendergraft Vanpool will be held Wednesday, July 8, at 10:00 AM at the First Christian Church in Miami, OK .

Pall bearers are grandsons David Vanpool, William Souder, Frederick Souder, Karger Vanpool, Davies Vanpool, and Gabriel Knapp.

Honorary Pallbearers are Tom Pendergraft, Larry Pendergraft, Terry Pendergraft,

Lonnie Pendergraft, Larry Davis, Larry Shewmake, Orvil Patton, Bill Wilmoth, Bob Kropp, Don Kropp, Earnest Hopper, Jerry Goforth, Bill Osborn, Bob Kline, Bobby Hayes, Joel Perry, Don Trolinger, Jerry Goforth, Ed Meyer, Ann Malocsay Pendergraft and Maxine Kropp Mayfield.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church of Miami, OK, or the First Christian Church of Miami, OK.



# Cemetery Details

## Grand Army of the Republic

2801 North Main Street  
Miami, OK 74354

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Brown-Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service  
5 B Street NW  
Miami, OK 74354  
(918) 542-3311  
[info@brown-winters.com](mailto:info@brown-winters.com)  
<https://www.brown-winters.com>

## Celebration of Life

JUL 8. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Christian Church of Miami  
2424 North Main  
Miami, OK 74354  
(918) 542-9816  
<http://www.fccmiamiok.com>

# Tribute Wall

CW

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the Fern Vanpool Family. I would like to extend my deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to you all. Words cannot express the sadness I felt upon hearing of the passing of a beautiful, warm, gracious and wonderful lady. She had been on my mind for the past several weeks and I'm sad that I just didn't pick up the phone and call to check on how she was doing since her fall accident. I was blessed to call her my dear friend and to have known her and the entire Vanpool family for 50 plus years. No matter how much time had passed every time I would see her when I visited Miami she always greeted me with her beautiful smile, kind words and a warm hug. I will miss her!! May GOD bless and keep you all in His care now and always.

Love & Fond Regards,  
Connie (Craig) Wallace  
Tulsa, OK

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Connie Craig Wallace - July 12, 2015 at 11:14 PM

SM

“ The Vanpools were wonderful friends to our family forever. Mom and dad went with them when they married. We attended Elm Creek Sunday School together and we all grew up together. Wonderful family memories. Fern baked goodies and took to Dad when he lived at Nine Tribes and he loved it. I always went to see her when I got back to Miami even after Mom and Dad were gone. I called her just a couple weeks ago and she didn't answer. I will miss her. Love to allm of you.

Sue (Ball) Moss, Greensboro, Ga.

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Sue (Ball) Moss - July 09, 2015 at 07:48 PM

AM

“ When we owned the Hallmark store, George and Fern were regular customers at our sandwich shop, "Let's Do Lunch at Resa's". What a great couple! Fern was a sweet Oklahoma lady and has done so much for the city of Miami. God bless you, Fern.

Allen Mann - July 09, 2015 at 08:47 AM

Anna Swartz

“ Fern will be greatly missed. She was so sweet and funny.



Anna Swartz - July 08, 2015 at 01:18 PM

SG

“ Fern was such a beautiful woman and friend of our family. We send our condolences and prayers. Susan, Phil and Bonita Synar

Susan Synar Griffith - July 08, 2015 at 12:31 PM

Melanie White

“ Melanie White lit a candle in memory of Fern (Pendergraft) Vanpool



Melanie White - July 08, 2015 at 12:14 PM

JJ

“ Sending our sympathies to Fern's famiy. She was a special woman and will be missed by everyone.

*Sherry & Jerry Jones  
(son of Laura & Albert Jones)*

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**Jerry Jones** - July 07, 2015 at 04:54 PM

JB

*Fern will always hold a special place in our family's heart. Such wonderful memories of her teaching my daughter to make pie crust that would become a Virginia State Fair youth purple ribbon winner for best in show! Also many evenings of playing dominoes with George and Fern. Much love to the Vanpool family.*

*Chris and Julie Buzzard.  
Ellie, Josh, Caleb, Ivy and Anna*

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**Julie Buzzard** - July 08, 2015 at 02:50 PM

LW

“ Fern was my Sunday School teacher at Elm Creek Sunday School for many years. She taught me so much about the Bible that I have never forgotten. She was beautiful inside and out. She will be missed for sure but heaven will welcome her great knowledge. So glad to have known her.

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**linda womack** - July 07, 2015 at 08:28 AM

JB

“ My thoughts and prayers to all of Fern's family. She was such a sweet, kind lady and enjoyed visiting with her. She will be missed at the Dobson Museum.

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**Jordan Boyd** - July 06, 2015 at 04:08 PM

LC

“*Fern was always a most gracious person . Many times my mother and I were included in Vanpool Family gatherings, and we always felt welcome . When ever i did come back to Miami Fern always insisted we have dinner together. I will miss her sense of humor and her independent nature.*

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**Lloyd trout Crumrine** - July 06, 2015 at 12:31 PM

KW

“*Miss Fern was a great lady she help me read and I love her like family I am sorry for the loss.*



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**Katelyn watson** - July 06, 2015 at 11:26 AM

MM

“*My thoughts & prayers are with Fern's family at this difficult time. Fern was a very kind lady and I know she'll be missed by all who knew her.*

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**Marsha Geouge Mauersberger** - July 06, 2015 at 08:02 AM

BP

“*A lovely, gracious lady. I shall miss her. May God be with her family at this sad time.*  
*Betty Pulley*

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**Betty J Pulley** - July 05, 2015 at 10:11 AM