



Mary Ethyl Garrette

March 3, 1942 - February 11, 2026

Mary Ethyl Garrette, 83, a cherished Miami resident, respected educator, and woman of unwavering faith, passed away peacefully at Windridge Care and Rehab in Miami on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, leaving behind a legacy rooted in education, service, family, and a deep love for Christ.

Mary was born March 3, 1942, in Afton, Oklahoma, to Lowell D. and Edna (Crafton) Nicks. She grew up in the Hickory Grove community, where she embraced her roots as a true farm girl. She showed cattle and lambs, rode cutting horses, and developed the strong work ethic and resilience that would shape her life. She attended school in Hickory Grove through the eighth grade before continuing her education at Grove High School. In her younger years, Mary also enjoyed sailing, reflecting her adventurous spirit and love of the outdoors. She later pursued her passion for learning at Oklahoma State University, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees and being recognized as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Graduates of her class. This early distinction reflected the excellence she would later instill in generations of students.

Mary loved sports and competition from an early age, serving as captain of her basketball team. That passion continued throughout her life as she faithfully supported her children and family, following them through basketball and softball seasons, countless horse shows, training sessions, and sporting events. Horses remained close to her heart, and she often shared trail rides and special moments with her children, creating memories that will last for

generations.

Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College was not simply where Mary worked. It was an integral part of her life and identity. She first attended NEO as a student and later returned to dedicate twenty seven years as an educator, mentor, and leader. During the final fifteen years of her tenure, she served as Chairman of the Hospitality and Fashion Merchandising Department. Through her vision and leadership, she helped establish three vocational home economics programs: Child Development, Fashion Merchandising, and Hotel and Restaurant Management. Her commitment to academic excellence earned her the Dobson Award for Excellence on two occasions, reflecting both her passion for teaching and the profound impact she made on her students. Even after retiring in 1994, Mary continued to serve as an adjunct faculty member, ensuring students still benefited from her knowledge, mentorship, and steady guidance.

Mary also found great joy in traveling with her husband Butch as they followed and raced horses across the country. She embraced every opportunity to stay active and engaged, often taking temporary jobs simply because she believed life was meant to be lived with purpose. Her strong work ethic and vibrant spirit were recognized when she was honored as Employee of the Month at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Above all, Mary's greatest goal and guiding purpose was to ensure her children and family knew Jesus. Her faith shaped how she lived, how she loved, and how she served others. She modeled Christ through quiet strength, compassion, and unwavering devotion, leaving a spiritual legacy that will endure far beyond her years.

Retirement never slowed Mary's servant heart. She remained active through volunteerism and leadership, including serving several years as director of Miami's Free Health Clinic and Director of the Senior Citizen Center, where her compassion and organizational strength helped expand care for those in need. She was a member of the P.E.O. Sisterhood and participated in Bible Study Fellowship International for many years. She enjoyed quilting and

remained deeply grounded in her faith as a member of First Christian Church in Miami.

Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Merle (Butch) Garrette, and her second husband, Gary Gilstrap.

Those who will continue her legacy and hold her memory close include her children: Scott Garrette and wife Lisa of Miami; Jamie Smith and husband David of Buda, Texas; Kelly Friend and husband Billy of Miami; and Jill Maxson and husband Jim of Kyle, Texas. She is also survived by her grandchildren Matthew Garrette and wife Alisha, Josh Garrette, Michael Garrette and wife Dawn, Michael Maxson and wife Sam, Erika Maxson, Caleb Friend, Cade Friend and wife Christa, Chloe Friend, Brant Walker, and Bryson Walker; her great grandchildren Cohen Friend, Emrys Friend, Olivia Garrette, Taylor Maxson, and Emily Maxson; her sister Linda Manning and husband Keith of Grove; and her nieces and nephews Toni Brown, Rick Brown, Christi Sullivan, and Stacy Manning Fuchs.

Graveside services will be held at 3:00 PM on Friday, February 20, 2026, at the NEO Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in North Miami, with Minister Leon Weece officiating.

A dinner and visitation will follow at 5:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall of First Christian Church in Miami.

Services have been entrusted to Brown Winters Funeral Home and Cremation Service of Miami.

The family has ask that memorial contributions be made to Ottawa County 4-H, 123 E Central, Suite 101, Miami, OK 74354

Friends and family may share notes of encouragement and view Mary's Tribute Page at www.brownwinters.com

Cemetery Details

NEO Veterans Cemetery

3807 Tahoe Dr
Miami, OK 74354

Previous Events

Graveside Service

FEB 20. 3:00 PM (CT)

Northeast Oklahoma Veterans Cemetery
Commerce, OK 74339

Visitation

FEB 20. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

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

There will be a meal served during the Visitation.

Tribute Wall

SW

“ *My heart felt condolence...*

Steve Walker - February 20 at 02:22 PM

KZ

“ *Kurt and Keli Zimmer purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*



Kurt and Keli Zimmer - February 20 at 12:23 PM

JG

“ *Jack Vansell, Dana Hanson, Grace Gunn purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*



Jack Vansell, Dana Hanson, Grace Gunn - February 19 at 09:20 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*

February 19 at 06:11 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*



February 19 at 06:11 PM



“ *David B. purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*



David B. - February 19 at 09:15 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*



February 18 at 03:07 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Ethyl Garrette.*

February 18 at 03:07 PM

CF

“ Chris and Tim Sullivan and Family purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Mary Ethyl Garrette.



Chris and Tim Sullivan and Family - February 18 at 12:33 PM

SW

“ Mary was a special lady - smart with a servant's heart. I will always remember her smile and her kindness.

Susan Waldron - February 18 at 10:30 AM

DF

“ What a classy woman in everyway. I always admired her deeply, she was an awesome woman in everyway. I really valued my friendship with both Mary and Butch. Butch was fortunate to have such a wonderful wife, and the kids such a wonderful Mother
Sorry to the family for the lose.
Godspeed Mary
David Ferris

DAVID GENE FERRIS - February 18 at 04:23 AM