



Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin

July 7, 1938 - January 5, 2023

Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin, who lived on Gavin Road, near Noma, died on January 5, 2023, at age 84. She was a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother.

Mrs. Gavin was a longtime biology teacher at Holmes County High School in Bonifay. She attended HCHS and returned to teach hundreds of Holmes County students from 1960 until her retirement in 1996. She received numerous awards for teaching excellence and was proud to have led dozens of students to exhibit in regional, state, and international science fairs.

Mrs. Gavin was born to and preceded in death by Erie Louise Ard and Clyde Hubert Penton in 1938. She was raised by her mother who was an Assembly of God missionary. She was a First United Methodist Church member in Bonifay and later in Graceville. She was devoted to Jesus and put Him above all. You could always find her in her chair studying her bible and she loved serving the Lord and her church.

She married Bill Tom Gavin, her devoted husband, in 1965 and is survived by their three children, Gayla June Gavin, Jennifer Leigh Gavin (David) and Thomas Green Gavin (Debbie). Survivors also include her grandchildren Megan Elizabeth Widner (Dustin) and Kayleigh Rose Bass; great-grandchildren Aiden, Ariana, Jaxon and Cole, plus legions of students she

touched in her classroom.

Mrs. Gavin received her B.S. degree in 1960 from Florence State University in Florence, Alabama, majoring in business and biological sciences. She worked her way through college as a bookkeeper for a piano company and as a secretary in the college president's office. She was a server on the food line in exchange for meals.

In 1961, she began her career in the classroom teaching business subjects at Ponce De Leon High School. The next year she moved over to HCHS in Bonifay, FL.

In 1964, she received a national grant for teachers sponsored by President John F. Kennedy's administration and went back to college for her master's degree at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. She was at the school when President Kennedy was assassinated in nearby Dallas.

She returned to teach biology for a year at Chipola College, then came home to HCHS, where she taught until her retirement after 36 years.

In 1968, Mrs. Gavin received a grant to work on one of the earliest ecology textbooks with noted Harvard University biologist E.O. Wilson. She also helped write, edit and develop practice exercises for several other textbooks.

After her Junior year at HCHS, back in 1954, the Bonifay Women's Club chose her as a delegate to the annual Girl's State summer civic program in Tallahassee. She credited that experience and her admiration for President Kennedy with inspiring her to become a lifelong old school Yellow Dog Democrat.

She remained active in political affairs throughout her career, serving as a

member, vice chair and chair of the Holmes County Democratic Party. She was a delegate to local, state and national Democratic party conventions and worked for Governor Bob Graham, Senator Bill Nelson and President Bill Clinton. An invitation to President Bill Clinton's inauguration hung framed on her bedroom wall along with many plaques for her own work.

Mrs. Gavin proudly served as vice chair and chair of the Holmes County Development Commission and, for 20 years, of Doctor's Memorial Hospital Board in Bonifay helping to make the new Doctor's Memorial Hospital possible.

There will be a memorial service at the First United Methodist Church in Graceville on Tuesday, January 10th, 2023, at 11am. The family will receive friends before the service at 10am until time of service.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 10. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Graceville
1111 8th Avenue
Graceville, FL 32440

Celebration of Life

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Graceville
1111 8th Avenue
Graceville, FL 32440

Tribute Wall



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin.



January 10, 2023 at 12:28 PM



“ I'm so sorry to hear of Ms. Gavin's passing. I was certainly lucky to be one of her students and had the extra bonus of being one of her Science Research students. She was tough, but she taught me to think bigger. I often attribute her influence as a core factor in who I am and what I do today. Jenny, Gayla & Tom, keeping you all in my thoughts. - Marcy Haines Cunningham

Marcy Haines Cunningham - January 10, 2023 at 11:17 AM



“ Jenny and I grew up together and we're good friends. I lived on Hwy 79. I would often miss the bus, sometimes on purpose, I admit and stand by the road and watch for Mrs Gavin to come down the hill. She would see me and always stop and pick me up. I always admired what a smart woman she was. I always thought she was way smarter than the rest of us from Bonifay and imagined that she should be at some Ivy League school teaching. I'm sure she could have, but she chose to stick to her roots and teach us. Even though she was very poised and intelligent she never made you feel less for not being. I know she will be remembered forever in our little town. Much love to you, Jenny, Tom and Gayla.
With love, Wendy English McGhee

Wendy McGher - January 09, 2023 at 11:23 AM



“ *Fairest of All* was purchased for the family of Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin.



January 07, 2023 at 05:44 PM



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket* was purchased for the family of Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin.



January 07, 2023 at 11:21 AM



“ *Heavenly Grace Spray* was purchased for the family of Maggie Elizabeth "Beth" Gavin.



January 07, 2023 at 01:35 AM