

Grace Walker Craft

September 30, 1919 - December 5, 2015

Grace Walker Craft of Bernie, Missouri, passed peacefully into God's hands on the evening of December 5, 2015 in Geneva, Illinois at 96 years young after a brave battle with leukemia. Dedicated mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Grace was surrounded by the love, comfort, and prayers of family at the time of her passing.

Grace Walker Craft was born September 30th, 1919 in

Cape Girardeau, Missouri. She was the beloved daughter of Samuel Edward Walker and Eva Elminia Eakins. As the baby girl of the family with two protective older brothers, Grace learned early that she was something very special, especially after winning the local baby beauty contest and claiming the first place prize of a small gold ring which she always kept with her.

Grace spent her childhood playing on the farm, sunbathing with her best friend Alice, riding her white horse into town, sneaking out for a little dancing, and enjoying the company of her brothers and sisters, Lester Walker, Floyd Walker, Luther "Buss" Mason, Chester "Chet" Mason, Dollie Mason, Lawrence Mason, Henry Mason, Sarah Mason, Ollie Mason, Ettie Rhodes, who passed in early age, and Ettie's young daughter Juanita, who then was raised by Eva as her own daughter.

Grace was admired for her strength and dedication to her family. There are countless memories of Grace protecting her family with her spunky personality including a time in which she hit a boy with her lunch pail for teasing her baby brother. In the 40's, Grace married Junior Early, but Grace was always the self-proclaimed "boss" of the family and did everything in her power to ensure that those around her were healthy and happy. Raising six girls wasn't always easy but Grace was firm and always made sure they were taken care of with food on the table and clothes on their backs. She was immensely proud that she had worked hard all her life, whether she was picking cotton, working at the Elder's Shirt Factory as a presser during the war, working as a line worker at the Brown Shoe Company, or raising her seven children. Grace's strong-will and hard work ethic followed her throughout her life and she had several other jobs, including working at Cleta's Boutique in her 80s. In her 90s, Grace frequently mentioned that she'd like to "get herself a little job" at the store, hospital, or wherever else she happened to be.

Grace cared dearly for her family, taking exceptional care of her own mother and acting as a "second mother" to her many treasured grandchildren. She was a strong believer in God and the true definition of a good Christian woman. She was always ready to lend a helping hand, cook up some biscuits and gravy, give



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a warm hug and kiss, or offer one of her famous back-rubs.

After her marriage to Virgil Craft, Grace lived in St. Charles, Illinois for a time, where she worked at a factory near the Fox River. Grace spent her time between Bernie, Missouri and Geneva, Illinois to be close to her family. She always enjoyed visiting the Fox River, often spending time feeding the ducks and geese with her daughters and grandchildren near Island Park.

With her bright eyes, big heart, and high-spirited personality, she lit up every room she entered and never met a stranger that she couldn't quickly turn into a friend. Her smile was contagious and her enthusiasm for life was felt by everyone she met. Her energy had no bounds, and she always loved to dance, sew, crochet, meet new people, and spend time with children. At 81, she was crowned "Ms. Millennium" and she also claimed the crown at Central Gardens in her 90s. She was proud of her crowns, her impeccable makeup, and the perfect curls she wore in her hair every day of her life. Grace was even more proud of her strength, her faith, her family, and her dancing. She loved dancing to the music her older brothers played when she was a young girl. That love for dance still brought a smile to her face and she took every opportunity to show off her dancing throughout her 90s.

Grace Walker Craft touched many lives during her 96 years. She is survived by her daughters Patsy White, Bonnie Bosler, Janet Turner, Sheila Ewasiuk, Peggy Fromknecht and Candy Arnold. She has now gone on to meet her parents, siblings, husbands and cherished baby boy, Stanley "Eddie" Early in heaven. She will be greatly missed by those she leaves behind, but will always live on in the hearts of those who love her.

Visitation will be held Wednesday, December 9 from 4:00-8:00 P.M. at Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home in Bernie.

Funeral service for Grace will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 11:00 at Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home, 113 West Crumb Avenue, Bernie, MO, Pastor Dale Hartle, officiating.

Burial will follow in Bernie Cemetery.