



# Edythe Branch

JUN 17, 1935 - APR 26, 2023



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# Edythe Branch

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**A** devoted daughter, a loving mother, an adoring grandmother and a true friend, Edythe Branch passed away April 26, 2023, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, at the age of 87 after suffering complications from Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's. She was surrounded by her loving family whom she cherished and adored. She will be profoundly missed by those who knew and loved her. There will be no funeral service at her request, but her remains will be buried in Galveston County Memorial Cemetery in Hitchcock, Texas, at her family's gravesite. At that time, a celebration of her life will be shared with friends and family.

Edythe was born in her parent's home in Galveston, Texas, June 17, 1935, to Philip and Edythe Sgitcovich. The family moved to Houston, Texas, when she was a toddler. The family finally settled in Texas City, Texas, in 1943 when she was in the third grade. Edythe made her mark at a very early age by receiving the Danforth Memorial School Award when she left elementary school. This award was given to the outstanding Danforth Elementary School student and was presented at the high school graduation ceremonies. Edythe continued with her education in Texas City graduating from Texas City High School in May of 1953. While in high school, she was a cheerleader, earned class favorite honors, won Miss Personality, and ended up being chosen school favorite her senior year by the student body.

Edythe lived in Texas City on April 16, 1947, at the time of the Texas City Disaster. This industrial accident occurred in the port of Texas City and was the deadliest industrial accident in U.S. history. The explosion was triggered by a morning fire on board the French-registered vessel SS Grandcamp that was docked at port. The fire detonated the ship's cargo of 2,300 tons of ammonium nitrate. This started a chain reaction of fires and explosions aboard other ships and in nearby oil-storage facilities, killing at least 581 people. Her father worked for a steamship company with an office right where the Grandcamp was docked and would have been killed, but during that week of the disaster, his company had sent him to Corpus Christi, Texas, on an assignment at that port. While on the Gulf Coast, Edythe experienced numerous hurricanes. She



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and her family also survived the Plainview, Texas, tornado of 1973 when their home was destroyed.

After graduating from Texas City High School, Edythe enrolled at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas. She enjoyed a wonderful college career, earning favorite honors every year. For two years, she served as cheerleader of an outstanding Horned Frog football team that boasted several All-American honorees. Edythe was always proud to have led cheers in every Southwest Conference stadium along with the Cotton Bowl in 1955 when TCU played Mississippi. Edythe graduated with honors from TCU in 1957. She returned to TCU in 1982 to be honored as "Coming Home Queen". She served as co-chairman in 2007 for her 50th class reunion.

While at TCU, Edythe pledged as a charter member of Chi Omega sorority. In her senior year, she was chosen homecoming queen and received the Margaret Endress Award for her dedication to her Chi Omega sisters. She returned to Fort Worth to serve as emcee of Chi Omega's 25th celebration on the TCU campus. She went back again to celebrate Chi Omega's fifty years on the TCU campus while being honored as a charter member.

A fun thing happened to Edythe the summer of 1955 when she was asked to be a contestant in the Miss Galveston County beauty contest. She hesitated for a moment but then agreed to participate. To her surprise, she won first runner-up. Her talent was playing the piano. She played "Malaguena" and received a standing ovation.

After graduating from TCU, Edythe immediately took a teaching position at Westcliff Elementary in Fort Worth. She taught there for one and a half years. She had done her student teaching at Westcliff Elementary before graduating from TCU.

Edythe spent the summer of 1958 back home in Texas City and happened to go on a blind date with a medical student at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas, named T. Coe Branch. Ten days later, they were engaged, having a beautiful Christmas wedding in Texas City the following December. Edythe then taught school in Texas City while Coe finished medical school. While he was in medical school, she served as president of the Medical Dames, the auxiliary to the Student American Medical Association (S.A.M.A.). The Medical Dames gave the coveted "Widow of Medicine" degree to the wives of the graduating medical students. During Edythe's presidency of Medical Dames, her chapter won the nationwide "Chapter of the Year." Several members of the group, the president of the S.A.M.A., and Edythe flew to California to



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receive their award, a beautiful silver punch bowl and cups engraved with “National Chapter of the Year.”

After Coe graduated from medical school, they moved to Fort Worth for a year internship. In 1961, their first child, Gary Alan was born. Three children followed, Laura Kay born in Plainview, Texas, in 1963, Julie Ann also born in Plainview in 1966, and Patrick Coe, born in Corpus Christi in 1968. Coe served a two-year tour of duty in the Navy on the Corpus Christi Naval Base. Edythe’s children were the loves of her life.

After Coe completed his internship, the family settled in Plainview where he started his medical practice. Edythe was not only a homemaker but was always very active in the Plainview community. She served as president of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Circle One, Plainview Church Women United, Edgemere Elementary School PTA, Plainview High School PTA, Plainview High School Choir Boosters, Chapter CZ PEO, Westridge Residential Association and Hale, Floyd, Briscoe Medical Auxiliary. Edythe and Ann Horn were instrumental in reorganizing the Hale, Floyd, Briscoe Medical Auxiliary in the 1960s. She also served as a Cub Scout Den Mother. She was awarded as a Life Member in PTA and as a Life Member of the United Methodist Women. Edythe was a member of Plainview Panhellenic and Chi Omega alumnae. She was honored to be a mother of an Eagle Scout when her oldest son, Gary, earned his that honor. She organized heart drives, cancer drives, United Way drives, and was a volunteer for many years for the Community Concerts series in Plainview. She was also a member of the First United Methodist Church choir. And as a mother of four children, she was incredibly involved in her children’s activities. Edythe was a member of the United Methodist Church her whole life, but she had a soft spot in her heart for the Garland Street Church of Christ where she was baptized and had many close friends. She participated in various Church of Christ activities. At her private baptism one afternoon at the Garland Street Church of Christ, several of these close friends were in attendance.

After twenty years as a homemaker, civic volunteer and church worker, Edythe went back into the teaching profession. She enrolled at West Texas State University in 1978 and in 1981, she earned her master’s degree in education, specializing in reading and special education. She was an assistant in the reading lab her first year at West Texas State. Edythe retired in 2000 after twenty-five years of teaching. She dearly loved being a teacher. Of those twenty-five years, Edythe taught one and half years in Fort Worth, three years in Texas City, and a total of nineteen and a half years in Plainview teaching two and half years at Estacado Junior High and seventeen years at



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Thunderbird Elementary. While teaching, Edythe made many lasting and meaningful relationships with teachers, students, and parents.

In retirement, Edythe traveled, played Bridge, and enjoyed her grandchildren who were the loves of her life. Early in her retirement, Edythe purchased a fifth wheel trailer, parked it in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and spent many fun times with sweet memories in Razorback country. While there, she was able to enjoy two of her grandchildren, Jackson Thomas Brannon and Edie Grace Brannon, children of Julie and Dabney Brannon. Edythe learned to love Northwest Arkansas and the people there. She loved it so much that she moved there in 2010. Living in Fayetteville gave her the opportunity to spend time with her youngest granddaughter, Gemma Coe, daughter of Anna Branch and Patrick Branch. She made it a point to always drive coming and going through Mansfield, Texas, spending many quality days with her grandson Ryan Lewellyn Miller, son of Laura and Jeff Miller. In Plainview, she was always close by to enjoy her grandsons, Creighton Coe-Owen and Cagan Thomas-Reese, sons of Kathy and Gary Branch, who lived in Lubbock, Texas. Edythe always said she had the best of three worlds enjoying her grandchildren in Lubbock, Mansfield, and Fayetteville.

Edythe lovingly cared for her mother-in-law, Anna (Nanny) Branch who suffered with Alzheimer's disease the last four years of her life. Anna was confined to the Santa Fe House and then the Prairie House in Plainview where she lived at the time of her death.

Edythe had a passion for communicating with cards and letters to friends and relatives. She spent a lot of time searching for unique, humorous, and inspirational greeting cards, spending many hours getting them off in the mail. Her family also looked for unique cards for her to send. The cards were always different shapes and sizes that had to be weighed, measured, and hand-canceled. The local postal workers became very close friends. Edythe would laugh while saying that many days she was running late getting to the post office in downtown Plainview trying to get there before they closed at 4:30 pm. She always said that if she could get her foot in the door, they would have to let her in. And the sweet postal workers always let her in, giving her a smile as they sent her on her way. She would even let them read many of her unusual cards.

Edythe enjoyed the theater – live theater, musicals, and movies. She attended many productions throughout her life.



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In 2010, Edythe left Plainview, her home for almost a half century and moved to Fayetteville to be closer to her daughter, Julie and her family. Soon after, Patrick and his family moved back to Fayetteville with their nine-month-old daughter, Gemma Coe. They moved into a house directly across the street from Julie and her family which made for many fun times and sweet memories.

One day, a dear friend, Wanda Weaks gave Edythe this tribute written by Ralph Waldo Emerson, dedicating it to her and telling her that it could have been written just for her: “To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty and find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – this is to have succeeded.” A quote that was read at a funeral that Edythe attended was “everyone has to die, but not everyone lives.” Edythe definitely lived as she “stopped and smelled the roses” along the way.

Edythe is survived by her beloved family, son Gary Branch, wife Kathy and sons Creighton and Cagan of Lubbock, Texas; daughter Laura Miller and son Ryan of Mansfield, Texas; daughter Julie Brannon, husband Dabney, son Jackson and daughter Edie (Edythe’s namesake) of Fayetteville, Arkansas; son Patrick Branch and daughter Gemma of Fayetteville, Arkansas; sister-in-law Elizabeth Sgitcovich of Houston, Texas; niece Sheri Omelczuk, husband Marcello and daughters Gabrielle, Isabelle, Abigail and Olivia of Chatham, New Jersey; sister-in-law Clelia Sonntag of San Antonio, Texas; nieces Kimberly Branch Davidge and husband Ron, Kelly Branch Starr, Stacey Branch Bradshaw and husband Garlan, Joanna Branch Clark and husband John, Heather Sonntag Brown and husband Mike; nephews Barclay Branch and wife Lauri May; Parker Branch; and many great nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her parents, Philip and Edythe Sgitcovich; brother Philip Sgitcovich; nephew Steven Sgitcovich; nephew Clark Branch; son-in-law Jeff Miller; brothers-in-law Phil Branch, Clair Branch and Rick Sonntag; and T. Coe Branch, father of their four children. Edythe leaves behind the legacy of a wonderful daughter, mother, grandmother, niece, aunt, cousin, friend, and in-law.

Edythe wanted to close her obituary with a poem that was read at her friend, Edwin Adams’ funeral. It is titled “The Dash” by Linda Ellis:

I read of a man who stood to speak  
At the funeral of a friend



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He referred to the dates on her tombstone  
From the beginning...to the end

He noted that first came the dates of her birthday  
And spoke the following date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all  
Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time  
That she spent alive on earth  
And now only those who loved her  
Know what that little line is worth  
For it matters not how much we own,  
The cars...the house...the cash  
What matters is how we live and love  
And how we spend our dash

So, think about this long and hard  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left  
That can still be rearranged

If we could just slow down enough  
To consider what's true and real  
And always try to understand  
The way other people feel

And be less quick to anger  
And show appreciation more  
And love the people in our lives  
Like we've never loved before

If we treat each other with respect  
And more often wear a smile



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Remembering that this special dash  
Might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy is being read  
With your life's actions to rehash...  
Would you be proud of the things they say  
About how you spend YOUR dash,

Memorials can be made to First United Methodist Church, 1001 w. 7th St, Plainview, Texas, 79072.



# Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Branch family.



May 30 at 9:05 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Branch family.



May 30 at 9:05 AM



**John D Williams** posted:

Edythe Branch was a darling lady. As a retired Texas teacher, she adored people. I often called her to ask how my little TCU Cheerleader was doing especially when TCU beat my University of Arkansas Razorbacks. She was a joy to be around, a true Southern lady. She loved sports. She loved her grandchildren. I know she will leave a void in your lives. I am very sorry to receive the word about her passing. I knew her through insurance for over the past 12 years. My God Bless this dearly departed sole. John D Williams; johndwilliams56@sbcglobal.net; 479-842-2614 Cell

May 12 at 9:55 AM



**Julie Brannon** shared 21 photos to the **Edythe Mom Grandma** album.



April 28 at 4:17 PM



**Frank And Pat** posted:

Gary, Laura, Julie, Patrick, We have always felt like you were part of our family. You and our kids grew up together; our house was your house. We will miss Edythe, especially Pat will miss her phone conversations that she and Edythe had over nearly sixty years. Edythe was such a positive person. When she entered a room, it would absolutely light up. She was such a caring person. It goes without saying, she loved her family and was so proud of you kids. It's wonderful, because of her strong Christian faith, that we will see her again. So, family, know that we weep with you and love you and pray for comfort and healing for you. Love always, Pat and Frank Gabriel

May 5 at 5:31 AM



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KW

**Kevin Walker** posted:

Patrick, Julie, Laura & Gary - I was saddened to hear about the passing of your mom. I have many fond memories of Edythe and she was always so thoughtful and caring anytime I was ever around her. I remember driving to a basketball game with her and Patrick to watch Laura play in Waco many years ago, she had to have the patience of Job to put up with a couple of young boys in a car for 16 hours and over the weekend but she was so much fun to be around. She was a very special person and I am so sorry for your loss. Kevin Walker

May 4 at 5:44 AM

AM

**Amy McGowan** posted:

My heart is very sad for Julie, Patrick, and all the other family members that Mrs. Branch has left behind. Mrs. Branch was a very special person who possessed the ability to make everyone feel incredibly special. She took the time to look you in the eye, ask questions, and be present. She cared and had a passion for people. Achieving all the things she accomplished in her life tribute are truly amazing, and she did it while raising exceptional people - this gift is so rare. May Mrs. Branch rest in peace, may you all cherish the beautiful memories you have with her, and may you all carry her extraordinary legacy forward. xx Amy McGowan (Hodges)

May 3 at 5:20 AM

AP

**Alex Wayne Pearson** posted:

Edythe was a lifelong friend. Starting at Danforth Elementary, through High School and then at Class reunions. Her Mother was my teacher at Danforth the day of the explosion in 1947. Edythe had a great sense of humor and as a cheerleader in high school could always get the crowd cheering. I'm so glad I had the chance to have a long visit with her at our last class reunion. I send my sincere condolences to the family and you can be sure those of us who remain from Edythe's school days will never forget her. Alex Wayne Pearson

May 1 at 1:31 PM

AC

**Am Horne Campbell** posted:

What a wonderful woman! The world has truly lost a great one!

May 1 at 1:26 PM



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**Dionne Brouwer** posted:

I have the privilege of knowing Mrs. Branch and getting to meet her through my job. I remember her beautiful smile her wonderful laugh and she gave great hugs. I will greatly miss her little stories in our conversations. About life and all the things that she did all the things that she liked. I also had the opportunity of meeting her daughter who was very kind who brought her in Mrs. branch. May you rest in peace you are the sweetest lady .Love Dionne Brouwer.

April 30 at 9:39 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Branch family.



April 30 at 6:56 PM



**Kamber Smith** posted:

Edythe- a contagious smile...a soothing spirit...and a way that made you feel that you were so important. She was a treasure to all that knew her. I am blessed to have gotten the chance to know her. Condolences to her precious family.

April 30 at 6:19 AM



**Sammy Gardner** posted:

What a beautiful treasure she was...and what a beautiful legacy she left behind.

April 29 at 12:23 PM



**Mary Katherine Wheeler-Mangum** posted:

I absolutely ADORED Edith in every way. I am so glad that I got to tell Gary something very funny that I experienced with Edith. Much laughter, much fun and complete adoration. Thank You, Dear Edith, for everything you meant to me during my lifetime. My love eternally, "M. K."

April 29 at 7:39 AM



**Elaine Grayson** May 1 at 5:25 AM

When you met Edith, she was forever your friend, she was so welcome in our home and in our lives! Edith the world won't be the same without your smile and earnest and sincere laugh! You won't be forgotten and I wish I had one more hug from my sweet friend!



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SM

**Sally Murrell** posted:

I taught with Edythe and she always back up the teachers. I would get a giggle when she wore her mink coat on bus duty. We enjoyed many good times together even smuggling in candy to the movies. She was a fun loving person that never looked down on anyone. I loved her! RIP Edythe



April 29 at 4:52 AM

CI

**Carol Adams Izard** posted:

Edythe was such a blessing to our family for so many wonderful years. Always smiling, always giving of herself, always caring for others. She was a comfort to our father in the last years of his life and then to us following. She was the definition of a true life long friend.

April 29 at 2:35 AM

SM

**Shirley A Miller** May 5 at 6:09 AM

Graduated with Edyth. She was a very friendly and nice to all kind of girl. Regards to her family. Shirley Zetka Miller

PB

**Patrick Branch** April 29 at 8:57 PM

We loved Edwin, most especially me. I so appreciated your father. We were great friends. I talked to Edwin the night he died as mom knew how much he meant to me and wanted me to talk to my friend one last time. He couldn't really talk at that point, by he could hear me. I think about him more than you could know. Thank you for the wonderful comment.

DC

**Deb Canterbury** posted:

She always made me smile and made me feel special...as she did everyone.

April 28 at 4:17 PM



# Media

**Edythe Branch**

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**Julie Brannon** shared 21 photos to the **Edythe Mom Grandma** album.

May 5 at 7:12 AM





# Media

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JB





**Media**

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JB



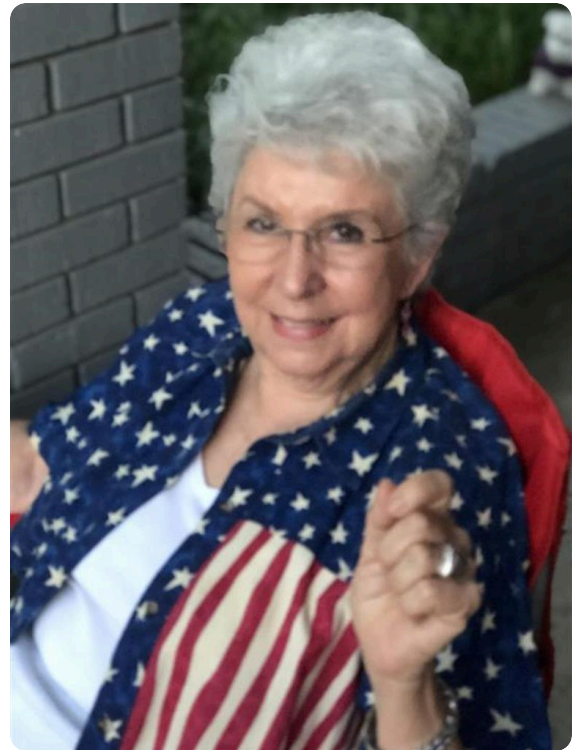


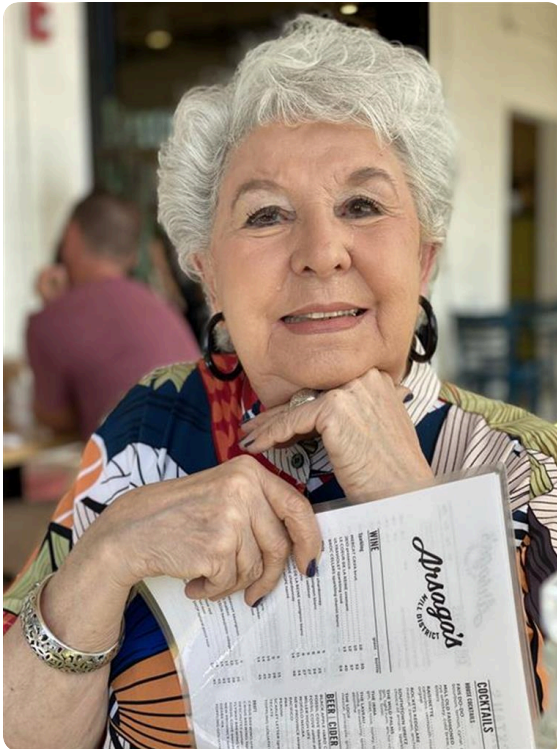
**Media**

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JB







**Media**

**Edythe Branch**

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JB





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Edythe by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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