



Shirley Spear

September 29, 1927 - December 9, 2021

Shirley Spear was born Shirley Marie Gordon on September 29, 1927, in Memphis, TN, to William and Stella Gordon. She grew up in Memphis and as a teenager in high school met Herbert Spear, the man she would eventually marry after he served in WWII. In her teen years she managed through the divorce of her parents and her mother's remarriage to Ben Jones, the man who would become more like a real father to her. She also endured a terrible car wreck with friends that left her with a scar on her left cheek that she tried to hide in photos the rest of her life. She married the love of her life, Herbert Spear, on August 23, 1946, at age 18. Their marriage of love and devotion to one another lasted over 70 years. They bought their first home on North Idlewild and settled into married life, both taking jobs downtown, Herb working at Union Planters Bank and Shirley at Lowenstein's department store. Their first son, Richard, was born in 1949. Soon after Herb was recalled into service with the Air Force they moved to Tacoma, WA. Shirley had never been outside Memphis. After Herb served a distinguished tour in the Korean War, they moved many times from coast to coast, to France and then back to the U.S., again moving coast to coast. Their second son, David, was born while in France. They loved to travel and take family vacations and passed the travel gene on to their children and grandchildren. When Herb retired in 1970 as a Lt. Colonel, they returned to Memphis to be close to family. Herb became a high school math teacher. Shirley got back into retail in the 70's and 80's, working at 3 different Fred P. Gattas stores, helping open two of them, and pretty much running the diamond and silver departments. Herb and Shirley also became avid square dancers, rising to an advanced skill level and participating in tournaments around the country. Shirley was proud of her closet full of colorful square dance dresses. Square dancing took them to Arizona, where they began to spend their winters in the Phoenix area, enjoying the warm weather and square dancing constantly with newfound friends. It was in Mesa in 2001 that Shirley suffered a debilitating stroke that fully paralyzed the left side of her body. Shirley did all that she could to enjoy life despite the stroke, traveling to see her grandchildren graduate from high school or college, and celebrate 60th and 70th anniversary milestones with Herb. Shirley never met a stranger and made many friends and forged lifetime friendships during her life's journey. She outlived them all. She passed away peacefully on the evening of December 9, 2021.

Shirley leaves her two sons, Ric and David (Jackie), three grandchildren – Britney Spear Tucker (Logan), Nicholas Spear, and Jay Spear, two great grandchildren – Tatum and Kellen Spear (children of Nicholas), and several cousins, nieces, nephews, and grandnephews that she dearly loved. Shirley was a strong and independent woman who overcame many challenges in life so that she could live life to the fullest. She loved God and she loved her family deeply. She will be missed but will remain in our hearts forever.

Services have been entrusted to Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery, A visitation will be held on the morning of Saturday, December 18, 2021, from 10:00-11:00 at Emmanuel United Methodist Church; 2404 Kirby Rd, Memphis TN 38119, with the funeral service to follow at 11:00 a.m.

Cemetery

Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery

5668 Poplar Avenue
Memphis, TN, 38119

Events

DEC 18 **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Emmanuel United Methodist Church
2404 Kirby Road, Memphis, Tn, US,
38119

DEC 18 **Funeral** 11:00AM

Emmanuel United Methodist Church
2404 Kirby Road, Memphis, Tn, US,
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