

Ernestine Chesser Williams

94, a resident of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, and former resident of Roswell, New Mexico, passed away Sunday, February 10, 2008 at the Prairie Grove Health and Rehab. She was born to August 2, 1913 in Roswell, New Mexico, the daughter of Dave and Lena Mae Yoes Chesser.

Ernestine was the third of 10 children born to Dave and Lena Mae Chesser, pioneers and ranchers in the Roswell, NM, area. While college was not an option for many young people at that time she always had her sights on being a teacher. She hitched a ride with a family friend to Abilene, TX, and attended college at Abilene Christian College. She earned board working in the dining hall, and earned her teaching certificate in 1934. She returned to New Mexico and got her first teaching job in a one-room school in the remote hill country of the Penasco. She was responsible for teaching all eight grades and any school activities. She would continue to teach in the Roswell area for the next 33 years. While teaching at the Penasco she met Boyd Williams, Jr. who lived on a ranch close to her school. They married in 1937. They had two daughters, while Boyd worked as a ranch hand and Ernestine continued teaching at the Flying H Ranch. She returned to Abilene Christian in 1950 graduating magna cum laude in 1950 with a BS Degree. She was inducted into the Delta Kappa Gamma society in 1957 and served as the Publicity Chairperson for 14 years.

Ernestine was a life long member of the South Main Church of Christ joining in April of 1925.

In March of 1978 she was inducted into the NEA-NM Hall of Fame.

After retiring from teaching in 1974 Ernestine began recording and preserving the history of Chaves County in New Mexico. She signed up for oil painting and creative writing classes and her work began to be noticed locally. She was very active in the Chaves County Historical Society serving on the Board of Directors for four years, and then working in the archives. She worked with the Lincoln County Historical Society, Roswell Writers Guild, Roswell Public Library, and the Historical Society of New Mexico. Her first book "Echoes Break the Silence" was published in 1987 and was a collection of short stories about her life as a New Mexico rancher and educator. Since her early experience as a one-room school teacher preserving the history of that educational environment became very important to Ernestine. She recorded the history of 32 one-room schools in the Chaves County area and made oil paintings of 15 of those schools.

A life time of honors cumulated in 1983 when the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame inducted Ernestine as a Western Heritage Honoree and recognized her as a "Pen Woman of Western Lore". While her gold star at the museum hangs with such well known names as Sandra Day O'Connor, Annie Oakley, and Dale Evans it was the "ordinary" cowgirls she knew who were running their own ranches she had such a profound respect for. Williams said, "The celebrities deserve a place, but the ordinary ones continue to preserve the Western heritage. We are the ones who are holding the West together now."

Ernestine was preceded in death by her parents, six brothers, one sister, and her husband, Boyd Williams, Jr.

Survivors include two daughters, Lena Mae Sparkman of Prairie Grove, AR, and Lelia Koger Washburn and husband Terry of Nashville AR; five grandchildren, Sparkie Sparkman and wife Loong, Ralph Sparkman and wife Genny, Lelia Hunter and husband Joe all of Prairie Grove, Anna McCain and husband Brian of Goshen, Arkansas, and Ted Washburn and wife Dee of Nashville, AR; six great-grand children, Jeremy and Lindsey Sparkman, Nuning and Boyd Sparkman, Noah Hunter, Cora and Henry McCain, and Wren Washburn. She is also survived by two sisters, Mary Ann Sparkman and husband Harvey of Roswell, NM, Genevieve Rice of San Angelo, TX, and four sister-in-laws Agnes Mulcock, of Artesia, NM, Betty Jean Chesser and Patsy Chesser of Roswell, NM, and Mary Chesser and husband David Hitt, of Dallas, TX, and many nieces and nephews

APPRECIATION

On behalf of the Williams family, we wish to express their gratitude
for your many acts of kindness, and for your
attendance at the funeral service.

Luginbuel Funeral Home

Prairie Grove, Arkansas

online guest book, visit www.luginbuel.com

**Ernestine Chesser Williams**

August 2, 1913 - February 10, 2008

I shall pass this way but once.
Any good that I can do,
Or any kindness that I can show
to any human being,
Let me do it now.
Let me not defer, or neglect it:
For I shall not pass this way again.

"Thank God every morning
when you get up that you have
something to do which must be
done, whether you like it or
not. Being forced to work, and
forced to do your best, will
breed in you temperance, self-
control, diligence, strength of
will, contentment, and a
hundred other virtues which
the idle never know."



CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF
Ernestine Chesser Williams

DATE, TIME & PLACE OF SERVICES
Wednesday, February 13, 2008 - 11:30 a.m.
Prairie Grove Christian Church - Prairie Grove, Arkansas

Friday, February 15, 2008 - 9:00 a.m.
Ballard Funeral Home Chapel - Roswell, New Mexico

ORDER OF SERVICE - PRAIRIE GROVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Prelude Music	Church Selections
"How Great Thou Art"	Congregational
Scripture / Obituary / Prayer	Vance Eubanks Pastor - Prairie Grove Christian Church
"I Can Only Imagine"	Keith Bostain
Poem	Lynn Mathias
Special Reading (An Ill - Tempered Bull by Ernestine Williams)	Anna McCain
Message	Vance
"Amazing Grace"	Congregational
Postlude Music	Church Selections

FINAL RESTING PLACE

Elk Cemetery - Elk Community, New Mexico
Friday, February 15, 2008 - 2:00 p.m.

MEMORIALS

Prairie Grove Public Library - P.O. Box 19 - Prairie Grove, Arkansas 72753
or
Historical Society of Southeast New Mexico - 200 N Lea Ave - Roswell, New Mexico 88201-4655

