



## Garlen Mearl Cooper

June 1, 1922 - June 28, 2020

Garlen Mearl Cooper, age 98 of Lowell passed away Sunday June 28, 2020 in Lowell. He was born June 1, 1922 in Cyclone, Missouri, the son of Joel A. and Lyda Belle Gilbert Cooper. He was preceded in death by his parents.

He is survived by his wife of 79 years, Christine Juanita Langston Cooper; four sons Danny Mearl Cooper and his wife Maxine of Montgomery, Texas, Joel Rance Cooper of Lowell, Arkansas, Larry Steven Cooper and his wife Catherine of Springdale, Arkansas, and Jerry Lynn Cooper of Lowell, Arkansas and a daughter-in-law Meg Cooper of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

There will be an immediate family-only service at the Immanuel Baptist Church, due to seating restrictions. A short graveside service will be held 11:30 a.m. Thursday July 2, 2020 at Elm Springs Cemetery which will be open to all family and friends, under the direction of Stockdale-Moody Funeral Services.

To view the full obituary and leave an online condolence please visit [www.stockdalemoody.com](http://www.stockdalemoody.com)

Grandchildren:

Christopher Mearl Cooper  
Wesley Edmonson Cooper

Kimberly Ann Kirby  
Ashley Nicole Kirby Klingman  
Andrea Danielle Cooper Ashby  
Joel Brandon Cooper

Kyle David Cooper  
Grace Elizabeth Cooper

Katherine Margaret Cooper

Elizabeth Paige Cooper

Great Grandchildren:

Cameron Cooper

Connelly Cooper

Brett Kirby

Christopher Kirby

Nathaniel Vann

White Cloud Vann

McKenzie Klingman

Eleni Klingman

Issac Ashby

Kayden Ashby

James Garlen Ashby

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. -- Matthew 5:8

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Garlen's oldest son, Dan, remembers hearing him talk about how he met Christine: "When Dad was 19 years old, he was on the side of the street changing a flat tire, and he looked down the sidewalk to see the future love of his life walking down the sidewalk." Rance recalls Mom telling her side of the same story: "Mom was walking with a group of girls, and when she saw Dad, she leaned over and whispered to them, 'The driver's mine.' And he was, for the next 79 years."

Garlen was devoted to Christine. A couple of years ago, she had to go live in the nursing home due to declining health. That was extremely hard for him. They had never been apart so much or so long, and he missed her every day. With the help of his children, he would visit her often. He fed her, he told stories to help her remember good times together, he sang songs to her, and he played his harmonica for her. Even though she was struggling with dementia and poor health, he made her smile and laugh. She looked into his eyes with love. Sometimes she would swing her foot and sing along, and when she was up to it, she would play his harmonica for him.

When Dan was a small child, the family had a wood stove: “I would lay in bed while Dad was building a fire. And I would lay in bed and say to him, ‘Far hot, Daddy? Far hot?’ And he would sit me on the stove to warm up until the fire got hot.” When Dan was a little older, Garlen often took him squirrel hunting in the hills and hollers of the area that would later become Beaver Lake: “I was so small, that as we climbed the steep hills, Dad would hold his gun in one hand and pull on a tree limb with the other to lift himself up. And I would hold onto his back pocket and he would pull me up the hill while he was pulling from tree to tree. And he would have the squirrels hanging from that hammer loop on his overalls.”

He loved to build things and he loved to tell funny stories and make people smile. When the boys were still young, he bought an old school bus and converted it into an excellent camper. It was a lot of hard work, and he did it all himself except when he let the boys pitch in to help. For many years, the family took the bus to Beaver Lake and other beautiful outdoor locations. They had many adventures and made many memories. On one summer morning, the family was sitting and eating a picnic breakfast next to the bus. A bird swooped down and snatched Christine’s biscuit out of her hand, and she whooped and laughed. He told that story many times over the years, and everyone liked to laugh and remember that bright summer morning. Everyone who knew Garlen knew about his quick wit, which always brought a smile to everyone’s face.

Rance was five years old when the family moved to a farm in Centerton. It had long been Garlen’s dream to live on a farm. While he was on vacation from his regular job, Garlen fenced the farm with Rance when Rance was just five years old. Whenever Garlen talked about building the fence, he always included his son in the story. He never said, “I fenced that 20 acres.” He always said, “Rance and I fenced that 20 acres.” Rance says, “I tagged along behind him carrying Dan’s Boy Scout canteen and a regular hammer. Whenever he would drive in a post with his sledgehammer, he would hold me up so I could give it a few taps with my hammer. He would say, ‘Now hit it a lick.’ He did that for every post. He dug all the holes by hand and cut the corner posts by hand.”

Another thing Garlen built for the family was a new garage. He built the entire thing from the ground up with the help of his young grandson Chris, who was visiting from Texas for the summer. The garage was still brand new when Larry was learning how to drive, borrowing Garlen’s brand new Ford pickup truck. The garage had a divider in the center that separated the two doors, and soon Larry introduced the new truck to the new garage. Then the divider did not divide any longer. In fact, Larry arranged for the truck and the divider to meet several times over the course of a summer. Garlen would never take any money for the repair and he would never say what it cost. “I forget,” is all he would say

about it.

Garlen was always busy thinking of things he could build that would make a better life for his children and grandchildren. When he was in his late 80s, he spent many a hot summer day out in his work shed, building Purple Martin birdhouses for all the boys to put up in their backyards. He wanted the birds to eat the mosquitoes so that the grandchildren would not get bitten. Today those bird houses are in back yards all over Washington and Benton Country and even in Houston, Texas. All of them are full to the brim with bird's nests. His hands are at a well-earned rest now, but the work of his hands will still protect his family.

After Christine had to go to the nursing home, his grandson Kyle moved in with him and stayed until it was time for him to leave for college. Then Jerry moved in and for the past several years, Jerry and Garlen have enjoyed taking care of each other.

Right up until his very last days, Garlen enjoyed being active and being outdoors. This spring, he and Jerry worked together and planted a fine garden full of tomato plants, squash, Kentucky Wonder beans, and a lot of other delicious food. He was always happiest when he was building something or when his hands were in the dirt, and especially when he could be with his family. On his last evening, he talked again and again about how much he enjoyed planting that garden together with Jerry. "Now, I want all of you to eat out of that garden," was one of the last things he said. He knew he would not be here for the harvest, but he also knew he was leaving something wonderful for his family.

# Events

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**JUL** **Graveside Service** 11:30AM - 12:00PM

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Elm Springs Cemetery

School St, Elm Springs, AR, US, 72728

# Comments

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“ I worked at the IGA Thriftway in Rogers during the 1960s. Garlen worked the canned goods aisle and was one of the hardest workers I have ever known, & would always help you if you needed help or advice. A truly honorable gentleman. It was my honor to have known him and worked by his side for several years.

Richard Greene

Richard E Greene - August 08 at 07:14 PM

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“ Sharing my sympathy with all of you and your family. Praying for all of you. Love, Chad.

Chad Ramsey - July 01 at 10:46 PM

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“ Garlen has been the walking definition of a Christian Gentleman. His ability to encourage others has been a joy to all who know him. As his pastor, I greatly felt and appreciated his many kind words and other encouragements. May the Lord bless us with many more of his kind, who live their lives with grace, who love the Lord, and who are strongly devoted to family.

Thomas Hatley - June 30 at 01:57 PM