



Guinevere Gay Straw

January 23, 1937 - May 10, 2015

Gay Straw, Retired Teacher, Artist Gay Straw, 78, died Sunday, May 10, 2015 from complications with dementia at the home of her son, Michael and his family in Columbia, MO. A Visitation will be held Saturday, June 6, from 2:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center. Guinevere Gay Straw was born January 23, 1937 in Anderson, MO. She was the eldest daughter of J.C. and Mary Bussinger who were both teachers. They moved to Carthage during WWII where James worked as a chemist for Atlas Powder Co. After the war he returned to teaching at Carthage High School and ended his teaching career after 43 years. The Bussinger/Beaumont families were from the Parsons, KS area. Mary was a writer who was Poet Laureate of the Ozarks in 1942. Her family, the Bradys and Blanchards arrived in this country before the American Revolution and came from Kentucky to the Springfield area in the 1830s. James and Mary had saved \$110 planning to finish their graduate degrees at Missouri University when the banks closed because of the Great Depression. They were left with 11 cents and their teaching jobs. Gay was raised in an idyllic setting with extended family in a strong liberal arts tradition surrounded by nature, beauty, art, literature and music. She graduated from Carthage High School, Joplin Junior College, MO State University, and Pittsburg State University with a Masters degree in Art. She taught art in the public schools of Webb City, Carthage and Joplin for 31 years. Along with her mother and sister she authored a textbook, Art for Tomorrow. In the Carthage community Gay was the 1953 Jasper County Fair Queen and the first secretary of the Carthage Saddle Club. She was a soloist and sang in the Chancel Choir at First Baptist Church for over 60 years. She started and led two woman's equestrian drill teams, the Joplin Misses and the Shooting Stars. These groups preformed in area parades and rodeos. She participated for many years in the Maple Leaf Parade on a favorite palomino or in her restored red and white 1959 Cadillac Deville. She was also an active supporter of the Carthage Humane Society. In 1954 Gay married George Straw. They have two children, Michael and Bonnie. Michael lives in Columbia, MO with his wife, Melissa and their two children, Matthew (18) and Margaret (16). Bonnie and her husband, Lonnie Hudson, live in rural Jasper County with their daughter, Vanessa and grandson Nathaniel. Her best friend and companion throughout life was her sister, Margy Johnson DeStafano. They taught art together, rode horses

together and shared all things. Margy has two children, Jamie Richie and John Johnson, and one granddaughter, Grace Johnson. Gay was gregarious, creative, artistic, musical, kind, loving, generous, forgiving, hopeful, and beautiful. She was greatly enjoyed and respected by her students, friends and family. All will miss her cheerful countenance, provocative repartee, encouraging yet straightforward words, raised eyebrow, beautiful voice, and loving acceptance. Remember her through your advocacy of legislation for nature, the environment, and climate science; animal rights; human rights, woman's rights, health care and population control; the improvement of our national infrastructure; individual end of life choices; drug policy reform; as well as the expansion of early childhood, college and trade school education for all. Beauty was her mantra and spiritual center. Gay was an aesthete. Art, music, and literature were her outlet. Nature was her muse. Gay loved all color, but was very fond of the exuberance and strength of red. Wear red to the Celebration of Life Service and/or Visitation. This is a whimsy Gay would have enjoyed. Memorial gifts can be directed to the Pipe Organ Fund at First Baptist Church, the Carthage Human Society or Compassion and Choices or Art Central. On-line condolences can be sent to www.ulmerfh.com. Arrangements are under the direction of Ulmer Funeral Home.

Tribute Wall

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“ *REST IN PEACE GOOD BY TO A TALENTED AND BEAUTIFUL ART TEACHER
AT MEMORIAL SR. HIGH CLASS OF 1975 Tony Gilmore*

TONY GILMORE - June 05, 2015 at 06:25 PM