

# EAST OREGONIAN

## Tommye Ruth Gardner Temple

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Temple

Tommye Ruth Temple (aka Mommy Tommye) passed away during surgery on June 1, 2017, in Pendleton, Oregon. She was known for her smile and her joyful acceptance of anyone she met.

Tommye was born October 11, 1928, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Thomas and Imo Shaw, the youngest of six children. While attending Central High School in Tulsa, she was active in drama and music groups and helped produce the annual Tulsa Easter Pageant.

After attending Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, for one year, Tommye went on to graduate from the University of Tulsa At TU, she was active in the theater and radio departments, winning the Best Actress award three years in a row, as well as performing regularly in Tulsa Little Theater productions. She starred in a weekly live television show, appearing as Cinderella. After teaching for three years at Mark Twain Elementary School, she returned to TU to teach speech and direct the Children's Theater and earn her master's degree in drama.

In 1963 she moved with her four children to Torrance, California, for three years, then Redondo Beach for four years. She taught English and speech at North High School in Torrance for those seven years.

When Tommye decided to move closer to family in 1970, she chose the Eastern Oregon town of Pendleton. She always said Pendleton was good to her and she was good to Pendleton! As an English, speech and drama teacher at Pendleton High School for 20 years, she directed the plays and musicals. Her "church family" at First Christian Church, where she was an elder and choir director, was very important to her.

And she loved the Pendleton Round-Up! She threw an annual Round-Up party, rode on the calliope as a Sidesaddler and received the 1988 Tenderfoot of the Year Award from the Main Street Cowboys. In 2003 she was honored with a Happy Canyon Appreciation Award for her many years performing in Happy Canyon, most notably for singing the Indian Love Call and playing the bass drum in the Hick Band.



Tommie wrote and directed the annual Kiwanis Kapers, played Mrs. Claus at the Altrusa Holiday Bazaar, and was active in numerous other groups, including Eagles Auxiliary, Emblem Club and Oregon East Symphony. In 1986, she was named Pendleton's Woman Citizen of the Year.

Some of Tommie's favorite activities were playing cards with her "May I" group, gardening, arranging flowers for friends, playing Bingo at the Eagles, working crossword puzzles and traveling, especially with her kids. Tommie was genuine, loving and nonjudgmental, lived in the moment ("go with the flow"), and thought every day was a beautiful day

Mommy Tommie is survived by her loving children: Toni (and Larry) Langston of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Patti Tucker (and Mike) of Springfield, Oregon, Mary Gardner of Creswell, Oregon, grandsons Marty and Steven, many nieces and nephews, and stepson Rennie (and Dianne) Temple and son Matthew. She was preceded in death by her husband Bill Temple in 1990, as well as her son Tom Gardner in 1998 (who is probably throwing a party for her right now!).

A celebration of her life will be held on Saturday, June 24, at 12:00 at First Christian Church. We will continue the celebration afterward at the Pendleton Eagles Lodge. No need to be formal or wear black: be comfortable and help us celebrate the life of Mommy Tommie!

Memorial contributions may be made to Pendleton First Christian Church or to Pendleton Eagles Ladies Auxiliary #28.

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