



Virginia Ruth O'Donley-Durham

May 19, 1927 - December 20, 2012

Virginia Ruth O'Donley Durham age 85 of Newcastle, passed away Thursday, December 20, 2012 at Norman Regional Hospital. She was born on May 19, 1927 in Ralls, Texas. Virginia was the 2nd child of five children born to Lorenzo Dow Holcomb and Willie Seburn (Tate) Holcomb. For the first 12 years of her life, her family lived in West Texas. In 1938 they moved back to Oklahoma to a small community East of Durant, OK called Blue. There she graduated from High School in 1945. Ready to tackle the world with her wild and witty spirit, she begged her daddy to let her move into town. Thinking she would not be able to make the move because of no finances, he told her that if she found a job he would let her go. Big mistake on his part! She promptly found employment waiting tables and rented her first room at a boarding house. Her love and excitement for life never discouraged her from stepping out of a comfort zone to do what others were afraid to do. Her decisions were not without mistakes but her positive attitude and forgiving spirit with her unwavering enthusiasm for life never kept her from starting again. She had many jobs throughout her 20's only diversified her abilities. It was 1954 when she was reintroduced to a young man from her high school days named Bob O'Donley . They soon married and together had two daughters, Micah and Marshah. She was 28 years old when the first daughter was born and a year and nine days later the second daughter joined the family. She was so proud to be a mother. She was a dedicated wife and Mother who always put her family first. Needing a career that would enable her to spend as much time

with her babies as possible, she decided to enter college when she was 30 years old. With a baby on each hip, the help of a loving Mother and Father, and the comradery of her sister Mildred, She and Mildred received their degree in elementary education from Southeastern State College in 1960. A record three years from start to finish and she was ready to start a new chapter of her life. The family moved to Oklahoma City she began her teaching career at Hayes Elementary School in South OKC. She was an unbelievable teacher. She brought to her classroom the ethics of hard work she had learned working on the family farm. She made learning fun with her creativity and enthusiasm that never diminished throughout her years. Virginia retired in 1990 after 30 years of faithful and dedicated service to her students. Her love for children and involvement in their lives, in and out of school, created lifelong friends with some of her students. Her special student and friend, Debbie Eldridge Braudrick, lovingly cared for Virginia during her stay at the Tuttle Care Center. She impacted many children on their way through Hayes elementary school. She made each of them feel special and empowered them with her "you can succeed" in this classroom. They excelled, overcame disabilities, and achieved more because of her love and attitude that, "all can learn and none should be left behind". Even Her staff members became her friends who were actively involved in her life even after retirement. The only children she loved more than her students were her children, her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. She always took time to play with the kids and joined them in their childhood fun with creative activities. She encouraged each to develop their talents by allowing creative expression though arts and crafts. In 1968 the O'Donley's moved to Newcastle where she resided for the past 44 years. After Bob's death, Virginia later married Benny Durham, who she called the love of her life. They lived 10 years living on County Line Rd. where her love for gardening was shared and expanded with Benny's. There was not one foot of the 5 acres that didn't have flowers, shrubs and trees planted. The vegetable garden was unbelievable. She canned and cooked for Benny bringing as much joy to her as well as for

Benny. They spent a wonderful 10 years together before he went home to be with the Lord. She never stopped missing her "sweetie". Virginia was a faithful Christian and exemplified the Prov.31 woman who rises up early, grows and harvest the food, who makes them clothing, and earns money and works long hours to care for her family. She was a woman who met the needs of those less fortunate and was generous to give. She was a faithful Baptist and church member where ever she went to church. 50 years ago she first started going to Capitol Hill Baptist, then Snow Hill, Ridgecrest, Newcastle First, First Southern in Del City and was currently a member at Sooner Baptist Church in OKC. She was full of love for her family, her friends and for the Lord. Her elegant style and beautiful hair became her trademark. Classy with a little sassy, she lit up the room with warm smiles. Her laughter and mischievous nature made her fun to be around. Her door was always open and good food could be found in her kitchen. If she loved you, she fed you and she fed many. Virginia will be remembered as a loving mother, a wonderful grandmother, a special sister and teacher and a dear friend to all who knew her. She was preceded in death by: Parents: Lorenzo and Willie Holcomb Husbands: Bob O'Donley and Benny Durham One sister: Helen Slavin She is survived by: Two daughters: Micah Birmingham and husband Carl of OKC Marshah Wallis and husband Mark of Blanchard Two step children: Steve Durham of Blanchard Donna Hames and husband Randy of Tyler, TX Two sisters: Mildred Daniels and Wanda Pyrum both of Durant One brother: Larry Holcomb and wife Wanda Carol of Mesquite, TX 12 grandchildren: Emilee Wallis-Gonzalez and husband John of Tuttle Natalee Brown and husband Jeremy of McKinney, TX Tyler Wallis and wife Melanie of Tuttle Laurel Birmingham of Shawnee Nathan Birmingham of OKC Allison Merota and husband Noe of OKC Veronicah Birmingham of OKC Jaquiline Coenig and husband Cole of Germany Dustin Hames and wife Amber of Spring, TX Ryan Hames of Blanchard Nicole Van Wey and husband Nick of OKC Joseph Durham of Edmond seven great grandchildren: McKensey, Chandler, Elijah,

Zoey, Seth, Andrew and baby Noah Several nieces, nephews, cousins and a host of other relatives and friends Funeral services will be 2:00 P.M. Sunday, December 23, 2012 at the First Baptist Church in Newcastle. Burial will be at the Blanchard Cemetery.