

Westbrook

Featured Resident

Mary Warren



Mary was the eighth of ten children born to Grover and Ruth Harris. She grew up with seven sisters and two brothers on a farm outside of Smithville, MO. Even though her dad worked for the WPA, the family was poor. All the children pitched in with the chores: cooking, cleaning, tending the garden, bringing in wood, etc. Mary attended school in Smithville. She enjoyed reading but disliked spelling. The kids enjoyed playing hide and seek and riding their bikes.

When Mary was starting her sophomore year of high school, her family moved just outside Liberty - the Roosterville area. They lived up on a high and had to hike down to the road to catch the school bus. The bus picked them up at Leonard Warren's house. Mary and Leonard started dating. Leonard was two years older than Mary. When he graduated, he joined the Army. He was an MP. They continued to correspond for the four years he was away.

When Leonard returned home, he took Mary to the favorite parking place (a church that sat high upon a hill) and asked her to marry him. Six months later, they were married at Providence Baptist Church, where they attended. They settled into an apartment in Liberty. Mary had started cleaning houses after graduating from Liberty and continued to do so for many years. Leonard went to work for Corn Products in North Kansas City.

After a couple of years, they moved to a small trailer on Leonard's parents' farm. While living there for four years, their daughter, Joyce, was born in 1952 and their son, Ronald, was born in 1953. However with the arrival of children, the small trailer became too small. Leonard and Mary purchased some land on Liberty Plattsburg Road and built a new home. Their family grew to include Barbie in 1955, Debbie in 1957 and Carla in 1960. The school was right across the street from their house. Mary would send the children across the street, head out to clean houses, and be home before the children returned.

Mary enjoyed square dancing and ballroom dancing. Leonard did not know how to dance. She finally got him to take ballroom dancing classes with her and another couple. He never did learn to square dance. Every Saturday night, at a great big old building in Roosterville, they would have dances. Leonard and Mary would go. Mary would dance with whoever needed a partner and Leonard would socialize. They also really enjoyed playing hand and foot.

Leonard's parents moved into Liberty and gave them the old farm house and farm. They sold their house on Liberty Plattsburg Rd and moved into the old farmhouse. But the kitchen floor caved in and the rest of the house wasn't in much better shape. So they had the fire department come out and burn down the house. They built a new house on the property close to the fishing pond.

Leonard and Mary retired at the same time. They started going to Yuma, AZ, every year for the next ten years. They would leave after Christmas and return in March. They went with seven other couples and they would play hand and foot, gamble and dance the time away. They really enjoyed these trips. She also had the privilege of taking care of her mother until her passing.

They continued to be active members at Providence Baptist Church. Their four daughters all got married there as well. Joyce married Monty and they had a boy and a girl. Ronald married Chris and they have a daughter. Barbie married Casey; they have two boys. Debbie married Terry and they also have two boys. Carla married Jerry and they have two boys and a girl. Mary also has 14 great grandchildren.

In 1994, they sold the farm and moved into Liberty. Mowing the farm was getting to be too hard on Leonard. In 2004, Leonard was diagnosed with cancer. Two weeks later, he was gone. Mary stayed in their home. Every Thursday, she played hand and foot with the girls.

Mary moved here in July of this year from her home in Liberty. She likes that the place is nice and clean, that the food is good and that there are wonderful people all around her.

Mary's words of wisdom to the next generation are "Forget results you have no control over and that don't bring happiness. Instead delve deep into your work until it becomes your prayer."

Exceptional people to deal with here at Westbrook. They take wonderful care of the residents and I think it's one of the best!

- deannep3

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