



## Imogene Jackson Edwards

March 8, 1939 - March 9, 2019

Imogene ('Gene) Edwards taught us all how to love, how to be faithful, and how to fight; three traits she remained unmatched in, even until the end. 'Gene's love for her family, her children, grandkids, her friends and beloved siblings, were only matched by her extraordinary faith in God and her love for the teachings of the Bible, and the strength and compassion that she derived from both.

In April 2011, 'Gene and Jim Edwards, were both diagnosed with cancer, breast cancer stage one and pancreatic cancer stage 4, respectively. Jim passed less than 2 months later, they had been married for 52 years. 'Gene tenaciously faced two rounds of breast cancer, a double-mastectomy, and small cell lung cancer over the next 8 years. She battled on, each round taking its toll. She fiercely survived and lived to share so many memories with her family and some "over-performing" grandkids who graduated from high schools and colleges, married, competed, acted, sang, and danced in the years that followed her first diagnosis. She was a warrior, and remained determined to see the fruits of her legacy on this earth. Gentle and caring, tough and protective, she was the Lioness of the Pride.

Last fall, after moving back to Mississippi to be near her youngest grandchildren, 'Gene was injured at a local mall after driving there to shop for a dress for a very special occasion. She faced the surgery to her damaged hip and the rehabilitation that followed with the same grace, grit and determination that she showed as the First Lady of Plano, Texas, during the late 1970's and 1980's, and similarly as First Lady to William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in the 1990's – two of the most coveted positions of her life. But the physical exertion during the recovery was monumental and difficult, and will began losing to actual strength.

As the complications of the injury continued to take their toll, 'Gene vowed to celebrate her 80th birthday on March 8th. She named some invitees, she ordered a "homemade" coconut crème cake, and "strongly suggested" the lunch menu. Surprised by friends from a distance, and family unexpected, the "guardian angel" of our family was surrounded by

so many angels at that celebration. Pictures and videos and memories abounded, and streamers and flowers and birthday candles were prominent. And when the party was over, 'Gene was ecstatic, and thankful, and happy, and very tired. So early that evening, she decided to nap. With her head and her heart full of dreams and laughter and love and life, of that day and 80 years before, she drifted asleep. And never woke up. Just as she and God had always planned.

Frances Imogene Jackson Edwards, known to friends and family as 'Gene or Mama Gene, or Aunt Imogene, was born March 8th, 1939 in rural Bowling Green, Kentucky, the eldest daughter of five (5) children of Raymond and Roberta (Brooks) Jackson, who raised their family on a small farm in Bristow, a small community at the north end of town. With a father who worked for the State Highway Department building roads and bridges, and raised tobacco, strawberries and corn on the farm, and a mother who toiled the day-shift as a seamstress at the Fruit of the Loom factory, 'Gene was tasked with managing the house and her siblings from a young age, where hard work, God fearing church lessons, and music were the daily bread of this family. During high school 'Gene got the opportunity to sing on the radio in nearby Nashville, Tennessee before graduating from Bristow School.

In 1958 she met James Wyatt "Jim" Edwards while she was attending Bowling Green College of Commerce, and he was attending Western Kentucky University, and on May 10, 1959, they were married at Jackson Grove Baptist in Bristow, where we are today, in the namesake church 'Gene and her family grew up in. Jim then led 'Gene on an academic whirlwind that would span more than 5 decades from University of Indiana in Bloomington (where son Randy was born) to Indiana State University in Indianapolis (where daughter Jamye was born) to Michigan State in Lansing, University of Virginia in Charlottesville, back to WKU, and then Texas, where they would stay for the next 20 years in Ft Worth (5 years) and Plano (15 years where daughter Allison was born). 'Gene and Jim would then venture to Tennessee and finally to Mississippi for a total of 10 years, where Jim was President and Chancellor of William Carey University, before heading back to Plano, Texas, where they would stay until Jim's passing in 2011. And finally, 'Gene would return to Mississippi almost 3 years ago to be near her youngest grandchildren, Jack (8) and Grace (14).

Plano was home for many years -- Jim was Mayor for 2 terms in the 1970's and 1980's, and 'Gene co-founded the Plano Preservation Association, a precursor to the Plano Heritage Commission and Plano Preservation Society, she was instrumental in preserving two (2) Plano landmarks, The George House – which sits in Old City Park in Dallas, and the Plano Inter-Urban, the train-subway car that sits in Haggard Park, as well as countless

other historical structures around Plano's Historical Downtown. 'Gene served Plano's Park Board in the 1980's and 1990's during a time when the City was investing heavily in the one of the largest City Park systems in Texas. 'Gene, Jim and the family were active members of Broadway Baptist Church in Ft Worth beginning in 1968, and First Baptist Church of Plano starting in 1976. She was a frequent guest at Creekwood United Methodist Church in Allen, Texas, and holds membership at First Baptist Church in Laurel, Mississippi.

'Gene worked at The Children's Workshop, a private pre-K and early elementary level school, and was an owner of several antique stores in Old Downtown Plano during the 1980's. After returning to Plano from Mississippi in 1997, 'Gene worked for a series of homebuilding companies on the sales and closing team until she and Jim were both diagnosed in 2011.

'Gene is survived by her three (3) children, Randy Edwards and wife, Leah of Lucas, Texas, Jamye Ferguson and her husband, Lee of Marshall, Texas, and Allison Travis and her husband Mike of Laurel, Mississippi, plus seven grandchildren, Daniel "Steele" Ferguson (Halee), Abigail Ferguson Drake (Josh) and Sarah Ferguson, Audrey and Natalie Edwards, and Grace and Jackson Edwards Travis. She is also survived by her brother Leroy Jackson and sisters Nellie White, Regina Bright, and Diane Reynolds and her husband Jimmy, and brother-in-law Pat Edwards and his wife, Nancy, sister-in-law Janis Knox, and 20 nieces and nephews. Also surviving 'Gene are her cousin Leon Jackson and aunt Sally Carter. Preceding her in death are her husband of 52 years, Jim Edwards, her mother and father, Raymond and Roberta Jackson, mother-in-law, Margaret Edwards and father-in-law, Wyatt Edwards.

Frances Imogene Jackson Edwards is our mother, our grandmother, our sister, our cousin, our truest friend and greatest confidant. She is the toughest, most tenacious and beautiful soul that any of us have ever known, or may ever know again. She shaped our lives, she changed our lives, she made us better than most of us believed we could ever be. She is a warrior for Christ and for her children, her grandchildren, her family, and all of those who are blessed to call her friend. Our Lioness gone to be with the Lion, our Angel gone to be with her God.

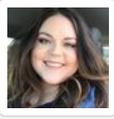
Blessings and special thanks to Dr. Lisa Bond, her oncologist in Laurel, with the hands and heart of God, who gave us the gift of these last 3 years with Mom. Also a special thank you to First Baptist Church in Laurel, Mississippi for their help and prayers, and the hands and hearts of Tera Phillips and Mary Shows, who were with us every step down the stretch, caring for and loving Miss 'Gene.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm, Friday, June 21, 2019 at Jackson Grove Baptist Church, at 959 Bristow Rd, Bowling Green, KY 42101. In lieu of flowers, the Family is requesting that donations be made to American Cancer Society, St Judes Children's Hospital, or Encore Performing Arts Theater (mail donations to 2606 Old Bay Springs Rd, Laurel, MS 39440) in honor of Imogene ('Gene) Jackson Edwards.

To sign the online guest book, visit [www.memorychapellaurel.com](http://www.memorychapellaurel.com).

# Comments

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“ I did not know Ms. Edwards. However, I found her picture in the BG Daily News to be breathtaking. I commented to my companion that she looks like a tough but compassionate warrior...so strong and full of grace. I was lead to this website and the beautiful testimony to a life well lived. I am praying earnestly for her family during this time.

**Amanda Bragg** - June 20, 2019 at 07:08 PM

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“ I will miss a loved friend that I shared so much with. She was such a gallant woman and taught me so many things about being gracious and strong. My husband's (Ernie), memorial service was on her birthday. We've lost much. I send you my love.  
Pat

**Pat Pinson** - March 17, 2019 at 12:17 AM

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“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Imogene Jackson Edwards.



March 13, 2019 at 05:39 PM

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“ Jill shared Gene's obituary with me, so lovingly and beautifully written in tribute from an adoring son. I felt as if I was reading about a dear friend, though I didn't know her at all. Please accept my deepest sympathy for the family as you journey through grief. Betsy

**Betsy Henderson** - March 13, 2019 at 04:59 PM

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“ One of the kindest caring loving Christian person you would ever meet! She loved her family so much. Shown her kindness to all she ever knew! I will miss my childhood class mate!!

**Shirley Hendrick Whitley** - March 13, 2019 at 04:08 PM

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“ What a beautiful writing. I loved the time I got to spend with Gene after she moved to Laurel. She will be missed, my prayers are with all of you.

**Marian Latimer** - March 13, 2019 at 01:01 PM

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“ I was Blessed to have Known MaMa Gene over the last few years My Shelby Loved her as Her Own GRANDMOTHER MaMa Gene will be missed Praying for All of You ,Love You. Deitra Yarber

**Deitra Yarber** - March 13, 2019 at 10:33 AM

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“ Love you mom.



**Randy Edwards** - March 13, 2019 at 01:08 AM

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“ The lioness roared her gifts into each of her children. Her soul sings allowing a beautiful legacy to grace their hearts.  
Libbie Kay Toler

**Libbie Kay Toler** - March 12, 2019 at 11:39 PM