



Kay Stephenson Bell

November 27, 1942 - December 25, 2018

Kay Evelyn Stephenson Bell was born on November 27, 1942 in Columbus, Mississippi, and passed away on December 25, 2018 in Franklinton, Louisiana.

Between her birth and death, Kay lived.

She created a handsome family with John William Bell III, complete with two handsome sons, John William (Bill) Bell, IV and Michael Stephenson Bell.

Kay was a Mississippi high school state tennis champion who then played college level tennis while obtaining her degree in fine arts while at Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW).

On June 29, 1963, Kay married the love of her life, John William Bell III. They lived in Franklinton for most of their fifty-five years of married life. While John William worked on the road as an electrical engineer, Kay taught Talented Art while giving golf, art and tennis lessons.

In the Bicentennial year of 1976, Kay had a painting that traveled the country on the Freedom Train. What an achievement for any of us, especially an artist of her talent!

Kay attended Centenary United Methodist Church and Hillcrest Baptist Church having dear friends at both.

Kay had the gift of encouragement and a serving heart. She strongly believed in community involvement serving as Country Club President for several years, Chairman of the Library Board, President of the Waverly Club for two years, as a member of the Magnolia Belles and last, and certainly not least as Chairman of the Washington Parish Free Fair Art Building for over twelve years.

Kay built a fair family beginning on the rodeo committee and painting backdrops for the stage. That led to another 42 years on the state committee, including the year fair headliner Ray Stevens “was fortunate enough to have Kay drive him back to the airport in New Orleans.” Kay also spent many years as a judge, exhibitor and chairwoman for numerous youth and adult art shows. A talented art teacher, Kay and her students painted many fair backdrops and projects. She created fair posters, catalog covers, billboards, signs, and backdrops for displays, tee shirts, commemorative stamps, maps, and even a coloring book for the playground.

Kay also lent her time and talents to the flower house, education and agriculture buildings, the poster, hospitality, stage planning and billboard committee as well as Old McDonald’s Farm.

As stated by Wayne Kuhn at the banquet to Honor Kay, “You often see Kay’s work through the fairgrounds without even knowing it. She truly has her fingerprints all over the Washington Parish Fair.”

Many people we’ve visited with in the last week have spoken of Kay with great fondness, describing her as a great friend and encourager, full of laughter and love for so many.

Most of Franklinton knew Kay Bell as a “great encourager”. Kay was really a true friend in our community. She celebrated other’s achievements and happy moments with them and then offered words of support and kindness during difficult times,” further stated by Wayne Kuhn at Kay’s Honor Banquet.

In the end, we remember Kay for the wonderful person she was, creating a life that allowed her to spend time with her dearly beloved husband, John William and her sons, Bill and Steve, while fitting her love of her friends and community into her passion for life.

We’ll close with Kay’s own original verse, “The Fair Volunteer.”

It’s not the critic that counts, but the one down in the fray.

The one, who rolls the posters, mucks the stalls, paints the signs, sweeps the porches, plays the music and cooks the food.

He tries and then fails and maybe not,

But he tries again, and again and finally says:

You can’t fire me. I’m a volunteer!

(Partial credit goes to Melissa Bienvenu of the Era-Leader, Wednesday, November 11, 2018.)

Survived by:

Husband of 55 years: John William Bell, III of Franklinton

Son and Fiance: John William “Bill” Bell, IV and Tonya Dingler of Sherwood, AR

Grandson: John William "Jay" Bell, V of Hot Springs, AR

Brother in law: Richard Bell of Baton Rouge

Nephews and Nieces and their Spouses: Jon Paul and Deborah Ewing,
Beth Renee and Shariff Wookil,
Scot and Jennifer Bell,
Kelly and Irby Summerlin,
Todd and Kelli Bell

Special Friend: Theresa Simpson

Also numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends.

She was preceded in death by her son Michael Stephenson Bell, parents Finton Stephenson and Ruth Blalock Stephenson, sister and brother in law Virginia and John Ewing, nephew Timothy Ewing.

Visitation will be at Crain Funeral Home Thursday December 27th from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm and after 11:00 am on Friday. A funeral service will be held in the funeral home chapel at 2:30 pm Friday with Dr. Gene Richards and Rev. Tommy Smith officiating. Burial will follow in the Morris Cemetery.

Pallbearers: Todd Bell, Dr. Johnny Burris, Johnnie Green, Rick Richardson

Honorary Pallbearers: Jay Bell, Jon Ewing, Dick Richardson, Scot Bell, Dr. Mark James, Shariff Wookil

Obituaries can be viewed online at www.crainfh.com

Tribute Wall

WM

“*Kay was truly a Southern Lady. She was always a true friend to many and will be missed by many. Our sympathy goes out to her family and friends as they remember Kay and all the memories made with her and her family.*”

Wayne & Carolyn McElveen - December 30, 2018 at 08:11 PM

RF

“*I'm so sorry to hear this. She was my art teacher for over a decade and was a good friend of my aunt. Her art classes were always a highlight of my week. I will always remember the advice she would give me to "draw what you see". Sometimes she'd even tell me to turn the source picture upside down, so I'd have to focus on the actual shapes rather than what my mind thought the shapes should look like.*”

Rebel Fornea - December 28, 2018 at 05:19 PM

TB

“*Kay was such a sweet, inspiring, talented lady! We had many fun days at FHS. She was always willing to help wherever help was needed. She always had that beautiful smile. She impacted many many people with her talent!!! Loved her very much! She will be missed! Prayers for her family 🙏🙏🙏*”

Terri Brignac - December 28, 2018 at 01:15 PM

DD

“ Our hearts are heavy from the loss of our dear friend. We have so many fun memories of her sweet spirit. May God comfort you with your wonderful memories of her love for you.
We will pray for your family.
Donald and Carolyn Daniel

Donald and Carolyn Daniel - December 27, 2018 at 01:22 PM

JM

“ My heart breaks for the family and friends of Kay. I sat with her at the Fair Arts building one night a few years back at the Fair and helped sell Fair posters. Until then I knew her more as an acquaintance. After three hours of laughing together, we were fast friends! I thought then that Kay was exceptional! After reading her obituary, my thoughts are confirmed! What a special woman she was! May her soul rest in the sweet peace that Christ Jesus offers. My deepest condolences to her family and friends.



Judy McCasland Micelle - December 27, 2018 at 12:53 PM

BB

“ I will truly miss my artist friend of many years. She gave so much to so many -- family, friends, community, and to the many students she taught and encouraged over the years. Prayers for the family that you will feel a special peace, knowing that hers was life of joy as she gave of herself. -- Bob Ann Breland



Bob Ann Breland - December 27, 2018 at 12:42 PM

SB

“ Kay and I began our college years together at MSCW in the fall of 1960.

She was a darling, vivacious girl. She was always full of clever ideas. As I recall, she led me into some daring ways to bend the rules —or was it the other way around? She will be truly missed.



sarah Burris - December 27, 2018 at 12:04 PM

BB

I am so sorry to hear this news. Kay was wonderful in so many ways. The angels are singing.

Brenda Pichon Berthelot - December 27, 2018 at 01:09 PM

SS

Kay, such a loving, kind and sparkling woman. Always a smile for everyone. She will be truly missed. Prayers of comfort to your family Kay...

Sandy Schmidt - December 27, 2018 at 01:09 PM

BP

Kay has always been a wonderful cousin to us. She was so talented and dedicated to her community and family. She will be missed so much. Prayers for her family

Becky Punzo - December 27, 2018 at 07:30 PM

SM

I've always felt a connection to Kay as we were in Beta Sigma Phi together, birthed our oldest children in the same hospital two days apart and carried the grief of the lost of a child. We shared many conversations that I am glad to add to my bank of memories with a very special woman. RIP.

Sandi Miller

Sandra Miller - December 27, 2018 at 09:38 PM