



## Ella Willene Lilly

November 5, 1945 - October 30, 2025

Ella Willene Jackson Lilly joined her treasured husband, Frank Lilly, in Heaven on October 30, 2025 at the age 79 with 6 days left to 80! Willene was born on November 5, 1945 to Oleta Rusk Garrett and Cody Garrett in Point, Texas. After living most of her adult life in East Texas (specifically Lindale), she later moved to Bedford, TX where she resided the past few years with her daughters and granddaughters.

Willene led an amazing life and touched many people. She started her teaching career in Fairfield, Texas in 1965 at the age of 20 and remained an educator for the remainder of her 54 year career. She taught a variety of vocational classes from middle school through college level, and after retiring in 2005, she continued to enjoy time with students as a substitute teacher in high school for many years. The students loved when Mrs. Lilly was there and would help push her around in her wheelchair and carry her things for her. The teachers she subbed for loved her visits as well because she made it a point to always leave a little gift behind. In addition to teaching literally thousands of students not only usable skills but also so much about life, Willene wrote two books, was a sought-after public motivational speaker, and was a leader in so many ways. Despite battling health issues for over half of her life, she always had a smile on her face and was ready to help anyone with anything if she was able.

Mrs. Lilly's heart bled blue and white for the Lindale Eagles. She LOVED her small town and the people in it. She was a ring leader in getting groups of people together for fun and fellowship – from all of the neighbors in the neighborhood, to close co-worker friend groups, to groups of students just having a fun place to hang out – with plenty of food to eat – after school.

Beyond teaching and taking care of her family, Willene was a beacon of support for others.

Not only her many students over the years, but she also led a grief support group for other women shortly after Frank passed, she worked with hospice patients, and she was a volunteer for CASA of East Texas (Court Appointed Special Advocates). She was always thinking of new and unique ways to use her time helping others. In her spare time, she enjoyed cooking/baking and feeding neighbors, shopping, rescuing animals, sewing, working crossword and jigsaw puzzles, and collecting enough plants to make her house seem like a jungle.

Willene will be lovingly remembered by two daughters: Amber Lilly Baquet, Jodi Lilly Protsman and her husband Jacob; two sons: Samuel and Jack Lilly; grandchildren: Addison Baquet, Brylee Baquet, Alexis Lilly-Valentine, and Blake Lilly; cats: Kit-ten (Fat Cat) and Gracie; and numerous grandpets.

Visitation will be held Friday, November 7, 2025 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Home in Lindale. Funeral services will be held at New Harmony Baptist Church on Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 2:00pm with Bro. Robbie Caldwell and Dr. Chris Webb officiating. Willene will be laid to rest next to the love of her life, Frank, in the New Harmony Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

## New Harmony Cemetery

9920 FM 724  
Tyler, TX 75704

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Home  
206 West South Street  
Lindale, TX 75771  
(903) 882-3141  
jeff@crdfh.com

## Funeral Service

NOV 8. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

New Harmony Baptist Church  
10251 FM 724  
Tyler, TX 75704  
nhbc@newharmonybaptistchurch.org

# Tribute Wall



“ *Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Directors created a Tribute Video in memory of Ella Willene Lilly*



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**Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Home** - November 06, 2025 at 12:27 PM



“ *I just heard of the passing of Mrs. Lilly last night. I was blessed to be one of her students at Lindale ISD. She taught my computer/typing class in the 8th grade. Her passion for teaching and love for her students was inspiring. She encouraged me and empowered me in so many ways! I have so many cherished memories of Mrs. Lilly, and I am so grateful to have been able to know her.*

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**Aaron Bunch** - November 12, 2025 at 07:25 AM



“ *The Mackeys purchased the Simply Elegant Spat hiphyllum for the family of Ella Willene Lilly.*



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**The Mackeys** - November 06, 2025 at 05:53 PM

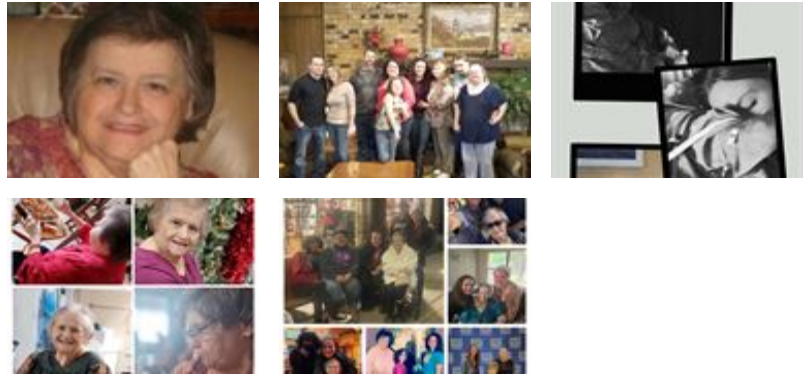


“ The Mackeys planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ella Willene Lilly.

The Mackeys - November 06, 2025 at 05:53 PM



“ 47 files added to the album Life Tributes



Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Home - November 06, 2025 at 12:18 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Ella Willene Lilly.



November 06, 2025 at 08:11 AM



“ Always in my heart, Penny planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ella Willene Lilly.

Always in my heart, Penny - November 06, 2025 at 08:11 AM

BH

“ *Belinda Hammock lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly*



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**Belinda Hammock** - November 06, 2025 at 06:30 AM

MR

“ *What an amazing, teacher, friend and human. I learned a lot about life, education and just how to be a better person from Mrs L. as I know so many did. Rest in Peace, the world was better during your time here with us.*

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**MIKE RHODES** - November 05, 2025 at 04:10 PM

E(

“ *I was one of her many, many students. I am now 36 and was just talking about her to my husband on Sunday. She was always so genuinely kind and sincere. I will never understand how she put up with children for so many years haha. Such a spectacular human. Thankful for the skills she taught us all and the smiles she fostered. Thank you for your dedication and care, Mrs Lilly. Im happy you get to be with your darling Frank again.*

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**Elizabeth Brantley (Mormino)** - November 05, 2025 at 12:38 PM

VD

“ *She was my best friend for 54 years. I will miss her so much.*

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**Vickie Dunlap** - November 05, 2025 at 08:21 AM



“ *Robbi Schmitke lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly*



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**Robbi Schmitke** - November 04, 2025 at 09:38 PM



“ *Debbie and Jerry Barnett lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly*



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**Debbie and Jerry Barnett** - November 04, 2025 at 10:08 AM



“ *Lisa Reeves lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly*



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**Lisa Reeves** - November 04, 2025 at 02:04 AM



“ *Wonderful woman*



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**Tony Vickery** - November 03, 2025 at 07:30 PM

AG

“ Amber Guy lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly



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**Amber Guy** - November 03, 2025 at 04:38 PM

KD

“ Karen Damon lit a candle in memory of Ella Lilly



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**Karen Damon** - November 01, 2025 at 02:34 PM

KJ

“ Mrs. Lilly had a profound impact on the lives of so many. She had an extraordinary gift for making us think, making us laugh, and making us feel deeply cared for. She will be remembered for her brilliance, quick wit, and incredibly generous heart. Her students loved her because they knew she loved them.

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**Keith Johnson** - November 01, 2025 at 08:42 AM

CS

Amber and Jodi I thought a lot of Willene and Frank praying for you both and your kids love you all

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**Chantay Stephens** - November 04, 2025 at 03:46 PM