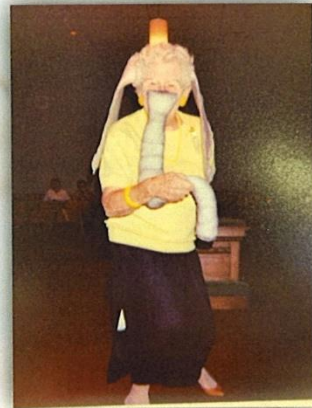
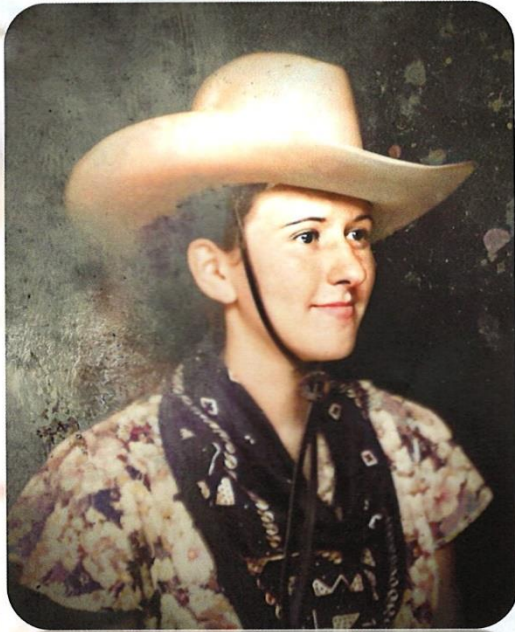


A CELEBRATION OF
Life



Mildred Doratheia Shell

August 14, 1919 – July 3, 2024



.....decades of smiles
.....moments of joy

On that sunny August afternoon several years ago there was no indication that anything could mar the beauty and peace of the day. It was a Friday, and I could hear the hum of my husband's tractor as he mowed the grass in the field next to our backyard.

Our house stands on a hill above the highway about a mile from the little town of Marble Hill, Missouri. Mr. Stephens, a farmer, is our nearest neighbor and he lives a quarter of a mile down the road.

I don't know what it was that caused me to turn suddenly and look at my husband on the tractor. As I did so, I watched in horror and disbelief as the tractor hit something hard in the grass, then turned over, pinning my husband beneath.

In a panic I began running toward the tractor knowing that I had to get Howard out from under before it burst into flames.

Jack, our ten-year-old son, was already by his father's side. To-

gether we pulled and pried, but all our efforts only seemed to hurt Howard, who was lying on his back with the steering wheel pressing against his chest. One of his legs was caught under the back end of the heavy machine, a Farmall Cub, which weighed 3,000 pounds.

Our cries for help rang out across the empty field. We could hear the cars go by on the highway, but they couldn't possibly hear us.

Howard was struggling to breathe—if the weight of the tractor weren't lifted off his chest he might die! Frantically we searched for something to prop up the tractor. There was nothing.

"Oh God," I thought in despair, "send someone... anyone!"

I didn't stop to think how hopelessly ridiculous it would be for a woman alone to try to lift a tractor. I only knew that Howard would die if it weren't done. With one shoulder leaning against the radiator, I took hold and lifted with all my might... and the tractor moved. I was holding it up, thank God! Howard was breathing easier. He

SEND SOMEONE... ANYONE! by MILDRED SHELL
as told to Jorunn O. Ricketts



was saved, at least for the moment.

"You try and pull Daddy out," I said to Jack. "I'll hold the tractor."

Jack was pulling as hard as he could, but Howard wasn't moving.

"I can't," Howard was straining to breathe and talk at the same time. "A rock... under my back... I'm hurt." His leg was still pinned under the tractor. It was obvious that we couldn't get him out without help.

"Run," I said to Jack. "Phone Mr. Stephens and ask him to bring help."

I watched Jack race across the yard and into the house and prayed that our neighbor was at home.

Then, for a while, it was as if time had been suspended. I didn't seem to be aware of the weight of the tractor and I wasn't even bothered by the heat. Meanwhile, Howard was struggling to speak. "I... can't... take... it... much... longer."

In many private conversations Howard and I had agreed that death was not something to fear. We had surrendered our lives to God many years before. Miraculously we felt He had brought Howard back after a head wound nearly killed him on Saipan during World War II. And now, once again, Howard was in God's hands. With a sudden calmness I knew that if Howard were to live, God would use me to hold up the tractor till help came.

Finally I saw them running toward us—Jack and Mr. Stephens and his son, Jerry, and Henry Thiele, another neighbor. Together they lifted the tractor. The doctor arrived, and then the ambulance. Howard's leg had to be stitched up, and the doctor said X-rays would be necessary. "But I don't think he's seriously hurt."

Then Mr. Stephens took my right arm firmly and said, "Now I'll take you to the doctor."

"Me, what in the world for?" I could feel no pain anywhere. But then I looked and saw that the skin and flesh of my left arm and shoulder was hanging in shreds. I could hardly believe what I saw. At the clinic the doctor explained that the heat from the radiator had actually cooked the flesh on my arm and shoulder to the bone.

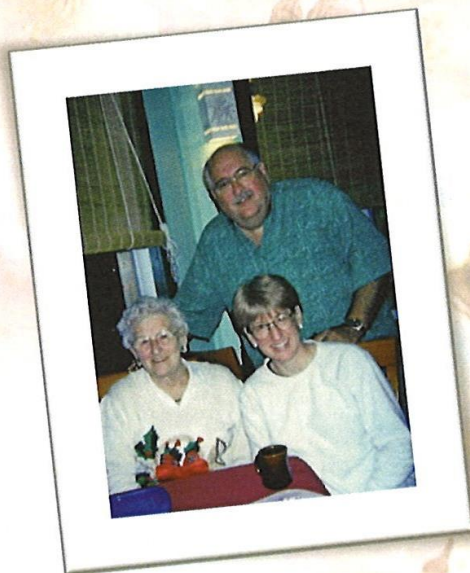
In a few days Howard came home in a wheelchair to nurse a crushed vertebrae in his back. My left arm was helpless until the burnt muscles slowly healed. For months we were quite a pair, both semi-invalids with a house and two children to care for.

Every time we think back to that August Friday, we marvel at the way things worked out. When Jack telephoned our neighbor for help, Mr. Stephens just happened to walk into his kitchen in time to take the call. His son, Jerry, who no longer lives at home, just happened to be there visiting that day.

And all the while God was lifting that tractor for almost one hour. I wasn't. On my own I couldn't. We still have the tractor, and I have since tried lifting the front end. I can't budge it.



Mildred and Howard Shell with son, Jack, and daughter, Dotta Jean, about the time of the accident.



faith, family and love..



Obituary

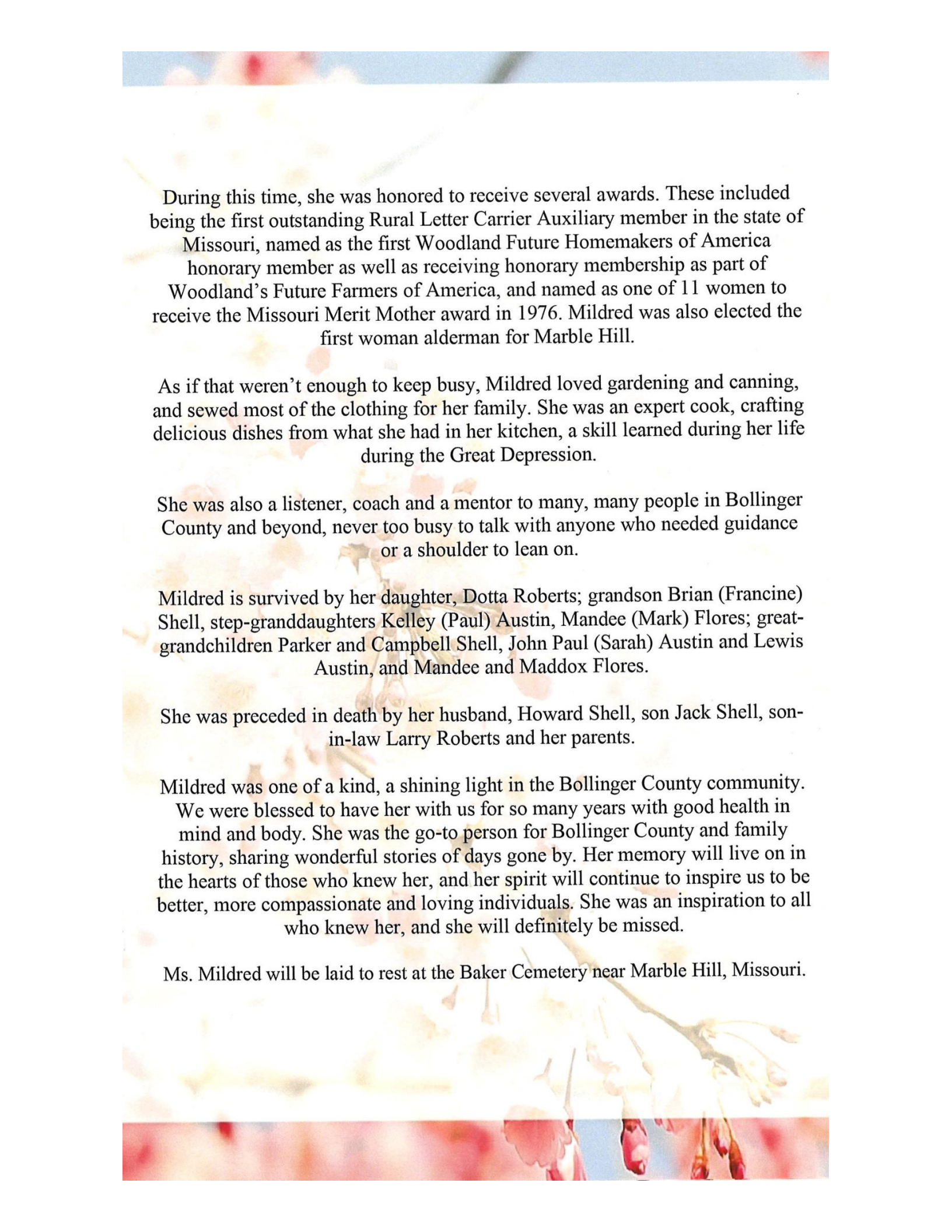
On the bright and beautiful morning of July 3, Mildred Dorathea (Bess) Shell left this earth and went home to be with Jesus, leaving behind a legacy of love and dedication that will continue to endure in the hearts of all who knew her.

She was born to Ephraim and Dorathea (Mabuce) Bess on her parent's farm just north of Marble Hill. As part of her farm life, she learned to fish and sew, and help her parents on the farm. Mildred graduated from Lutesville High School in 1938 and attended SEMO University before working for the ASC office in Marble Hill. In November of 1942, she married George Howard Shell in Reno, Nevada, at the beginning of World War II. Their life story was one of faith, endurance, steadfast support, laughter, and shared dreams.

Mildred worked either full- or part-time throughout her life. During the war, she worked as a caseworker for the Bollinger County Welfare office and the AAA office. After Howard returned from the service, he and Mildred bought the IGA grocery store in Lutesville and operated it until 1950. In 1959, they purchased Sunset Floral Shop, and ran it until 1968. After retiring from the floral shop, Mildred also worked for Bollinger County Bank and Lape's Bernina sewing shop in Cape Girardeau. Most recently, she had her own business creating and selling potholders for local businesses.

Mildred was quite active in a number of community organizations, both locally and throughout the state. She was Worthy Matron for Eastern Star of Victory Chapter #431 in Marble Hill and District Deputy Grand Matron for 49th District of Eastern Star, a member of White Shrine chapter in Cape Girardeau Ninth District President for Missouri General Federation of Womens Clubs as well as President of our local chapter Marble Hill Study Club, and State President of Missouri Rural Letter Carriers Auxiliary. She was also a member of Daughters of the American Revolution, a charter member of VFW chapter, a member of the Missouri Extension Council board, chaired the Red Cross canteen during local blood drives, a member of Rebekah Lodge, and chaired the Bicentennial Flag ceremony for our town's centennial. Mildred also served as PTA president twice, one term for each of her children. At the time of her passing, she was a member of First Baptist Church of Marble Hill, actively participating as church organist, former head of the kitchen committee and Sunday School teacher, a member of GFWC Marble Hill Study Club, and a member of the Board of Directors for the Bollinger County Health Center.





During this time, she was honored to receive several awards. These included being the first outstanding Rural Letter Carrier Auxiliary member in the state of Missouri, named as the first Woodland Future Homemakers of America honorary member as well as receiving honorary membership as part of Woodland's Future Farmers of America, and named as one of 11 women to receive the Missouri Merit Mother award in 1976. Mildred was also elected the first woman alderman for Marble Hill.

As if that weren't enough to keep busy, Mildred loved gardening and canning, and sewed most of the clothing for her family. She was an expert cook, crafting delicious dishes from what she had in her kitchen, a skill learned during her life during the Great Depression.

She was also a listener, coach and a mentor to many, many people in Bollinger County and beyond, never too busy to talk with anyone who needed guidance or a shoulder to lean on.

Mildred is survived by her daughter, Dotta Roberts; grandson Brian (Francine) Shell, step-granddaughters Kelley (Paul) Austin, Mandee (Mark) Flores; great-grandchildren Parker and Campbell Shell, John Paul (Sarah) Austin and Lewis Austin, and Mandee and Maddox Flores.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Howard Shell, son Jack Shell, son-in-law Larry Roberts and her parents.

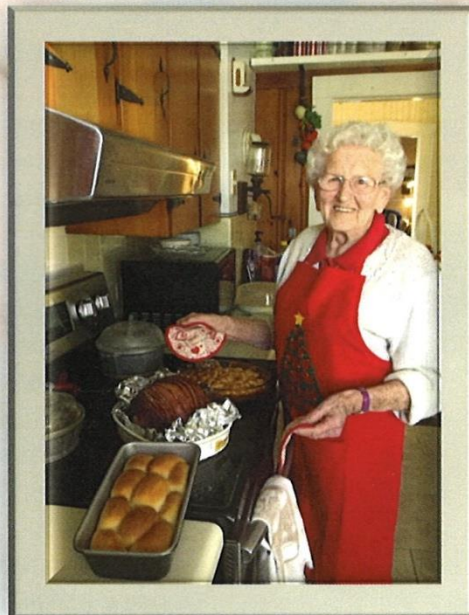
Mildred was one of a kind, a shining light in the Bollinger County community. We were blessed to have her with us for so many years with good health in mind and body. She was the go-to person for Bollinger County and family history, sharing wonderful stories of days gone by. Her memory will live on in the hearts of those who knew her, and her spirit will continue to inspire us to be better, more compassionate and loving individuals. She was an inspiration to all who knew her, and she will definitely be missed.

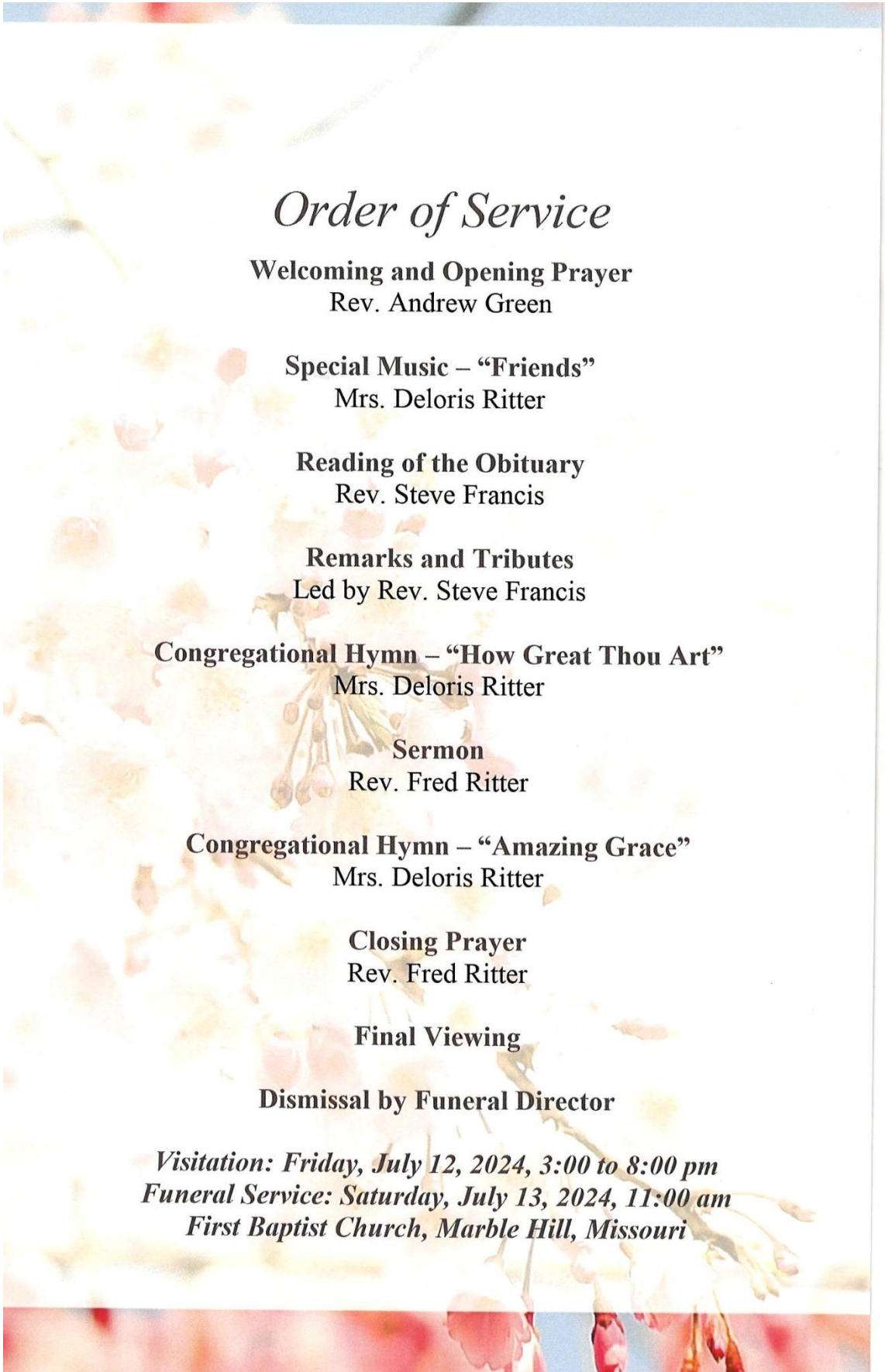
Ms. Mildred will be laid to rest at the Baker Cemetery near Marble Hill, Missouri.



“Ms. Mildred”

‘There are some people in life that
make you **LAUGH** a little louder,
SMILE a little bigger and
LIVE just a little bit better’





Order of Service

Welcoming and Opening Prayer
Rev. Andrew Green

Special Music – “Friends”
Mrs. Deloris Ritter

Reading of the Obituary
Rev. Steve Francis

Remarks and Tributes
Led by Rev. Steve Francis

Congregational Hymn – “How Great Thou Art”
Mrs. Deloris Ritter

Sermon
Rev. Fred Ritter

Congregational Hymn – “Amazing Grace”
Mrs. Deloris Ritter

Closing Prayer
Rev. Fred Ritter

Final Viewing

Dismissal by Funeral Director

Visitation: Friday, July 12, 2024, 3:00 to 8:00 pm
Funeral Service: Saturday, July 13, 2024, 11:00 am
First Baptist Church, Marble Hill, Missouri



With special thanks from the family...

Thank you so much for all your love and support during
this time. We will be forever grateful.

Services by the
Hutchings-Pendergrass Funeral Chapel
Marble Hill, Missouri