

## Grandma, Etta Hogue

Praise – Positive – Encouraging – Healthy – Supportive – Growth – Development – Enjoyment – Love

*My Grandma was special, one of a kind, able to connect with children, giving, caring, trusting of others, and understanding—my Grandma was my best friend.*



***Mr. & Mrs. Harris and Etta Hogue***

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Martha Etta Hogue taught third grade in Bryant and then in Bauxite, Arkansas but was retired by the time I came along. We moved into my Great-Grandma's house right next door to Grandma in the summer before I entered the third grade. A few years later I moved into Grandma's house and spend all my teenage years with her until January 12, 1991. She was a teacher to young minds and I was personally tutored by her, which made me feel special.

She graduated from Central High School where she played on the basketball team. She and her sisters formed the Atlanta club that supported Little Rock University women's basketball.

Betty Jo Stephens, Grandma's younger sister, was the first women's basketball coach at Little Rock University. I often served as the ball boy, and when I wasn't the ball boy I would sit in the family section where all her sisters watched the games. Aunt Betty Jo went on to be recognized for all her contributions to the women's athletic programs at UALR and she still supports all the basketball programs by attending all of the men's and women's games.



*Betty Jo Stephens*

Grandma loved to host parties in her home. Her personality drew her friends and our family to her house. We always wanted to hold events in her large entertaining rooms that felt so warm and secure, as if she were embracing you the entire time you were there. The main event room was a formal sitting area with antique furniture around the outside walls. This is where we viewed slide shows of her trips, the last family reunion, or some holiday pictures from Easter, Christmas, or Halloween. She had pictures from every state in the United States and several countries from around the world—like her favorite, the Israel-Jerusalem trip. We all would live these adventures out with her when she told her story along with the slides.

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## ***A Lifetime of Adventure, Compassion, and Mentoring***

I was taken on adventures by my Grandma. She took the three oldest grandchildren, my sister and two cousins, to Washington D.C. My sister said that they used just about every mode of transportation there—taxi, subway, trolley, bus and bicycles. The oldest grandson, Kyle, said they could barely get up with Grandma because she wanted to show them so many sights. The two younger grandchildren, my cousin and me, went to Atlanta, Georgia. She gave me a diary and told me to write about every day of the trip, so I did. I still have that diary today and the memories it brings back just reading through it—well, it is like being with her all over again, experiencing the awe of Stone Mountain, the excitement of the Inclined Railroad, and the thrill of rides at Six Flags.



***Stone Mountain, the Inclined Railroad, and the thrill of rides at Six Flags***

Reading the words she spoke along the way that I wrote in the diary I can mentally hear her voice, “You two are going to be prunes if you don’t get out soon,” “Beautiful just Beautiful!” and “We are about half way there.”

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She was very compassionate and trusting of others. My dad told me how she would feed the homeless that rode through Bauxite on the train. The homeless would place markers for other homeless people to know her house was where they could get a meal. That compassion of caring and giving flowed right into her classroom like giving comics to students to encourage them to read, playing educational games with students, and awarding prizes in writing contents. She cared for her students as if they were her own family. She lived across the street from the school in Bauxite, which allowed her to give the unfortunate children in school a place to take a bath and some new clothes or hand-me-downs and a good bite to eat before returning to school. During Christmas the kids in her class would draw names to exchange gifts; she always had gifts for the children who couldn't afford to purchase anything so they never felt left out.

She taught me to paint, encouraged me to sing in churches, and she taught me to have fun by having fun with me. She rode on the back of every motorcycle I owned, even though I threw her off my go-cart sliding around a dirt track. She was laughing the whole time as she got up off the ground, brushing herself off. When we weren't outside having fun, she would invite me into her kitchen to learn how to cook. She was always teaching me something like how to sew and quilt as she gathered with her quilting group, the ladies from church, sitting around the quilting frame working and telling stories. Grandma was an excellent storyteller and taught me to be a storyteller, too. At family reunions her dad, who passed away at the age of 103, would tell stories. As he got older his children (Grandma was one of seven siblings, one brother and five sisters) were honored by performing this position of storyteller. They all could *spin a yard* and did so every time the family was together.



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### ***Memorabilia***

Recently my parents have been giving me things that belonged to my Grandma—paintings of hers, her college ring, Girl Scout badges, and a box of photos. I started looking through the pictures and reading the notes written on the back. One picture showed my great-grandfather, John I. Hogue, who was a Bryant school teacher when the entire school was in one small white building. The picture showed the entire school with the teachers; Great-Grandfather was one of three teachers, totaling only 73 people in the photo.



The Bryant, Arkansas schoolhouse, teachers, and students

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A flip photo book with black construction paper for the outer covers contains photos of Grandma being silly. The funniest is at “The End”—picture of her with a brown paper sack on her head and kneeling on a small wagon.



*Grandma's sense of humor shines through at "The End".*

I have no idea what she is doing. She was very young, in her late teens or early 20s in the picture. Even today I learn more about Martha Etta Hogue and her amazing life.