

## BENNETT

Mildred Orndorff Teague Bennett, a lifelong El Paso resident who helped set up special education programs in the public schools, died Friday, February 3, 2006, in Tucson, Ariz.



She was 91, just 15 days short of her 92nd birthday. She had worked 25 years

for the Ysleta Independent School District, starting as an elementary teacher and retiring in 1978 as the district's Director of Special Education. Ysleta Supt. J.M. Hanks wrote, in a letter noting her retirement, "You were among the first school officials to recognize the obligation of public education to provide for the needs of special children," and said that in retirement, she was "always free to come and go, not as a visitor, but as a member of the team." Mildred was born Feb. 18, 1914, in El Paso County, the daughter of Seth B. and Mattie Dee Patterson Orndorff.

She was a graduate of El Paso High School and the Texas College of Mines (now UTEP). She married, June 10, 1936, at Islip, Long Island, N.Y., Clyde H. Teague Jr., a Coast Guard officer from El Paso who was assigned at New London, Conn. Their daughter, Teena (Bennett) Sandstrom of Tucson, was an infant when Teague died in a plane crash in December 1938. Mildred then married, Feb. 10, 1940, in Carlsbad, N.M., Frank C. Bennett, who was active in several El Paso-area businesses and later was a teacher in the Ysleta district. He died June 18, 1974, in El Paso. They had two daughters, Carolyn Wittrup of El Paso, a teacher in the Socorro district, and Sarah Gowan, a retired school administrator in the Socorro and Ysleta districts, who now lives in Alpine, Ariz. Mildred Bennett, known in the family as Meme, loved many things about her more than 25 years in retirement, starting with her three daughters, her 10 surviving grandchildren, and

her 21 and 3/4 great-grandchildren. Her grandchildren are Jay (Laura) Sandstrom, Julie (Doug) Sandstrom Waddell, Eric Wolterstorff, Sarah Lynn (Tim) Wolterstorff Shearin, Susan (Joran) Wolterstorff Viers, Cameron (Darlene) Wolterstorff, Tom (Suzanne) Gowan, Lisa (Issac) Gowan Ramirez, Gregory (Crystal) Gowan and Debbie (Travis) Gowan Hawkins. She also loved her daughters, current and former significant others: Tom Gowan of Comfort, Texas; D.J. Murphy of Alpine, Ariz.; Ralph Parsons of Las Cruces; Jerry Wolterstorff of Jacksonville, Ala.; and Burt Wittrup of El Paso. She had been especially close to her late son-in-law, Jim Sandstrom of Moline, Ill., and Tucson. A very special person in her life was her surviving sister, Martha Orndorff Cole of Richmond, Va.

She is also survived by numerous nephews and nieces. She had loving memories of growing up in one of the larger Kern Place homes, in the shadows of several family members, including a grandmother, Alzina Allis Orndorff DeGroff (Mama De), who in 1926 built the Orndorff Hotel, the present Cortez Building, and was a force to be reckoned with in El Paso early in the 20th century; her father, wearing the badge of El Paso County sheriff for 12 years; and a grandfather, John Frederick Patterson, a retired Methodist circuit preacher who was imposing even though he claimed to be blessed with inconspicuousness.

She loved to play cards, and will be missed by bridge groups at the Vista Hills Country Club, the Park East Association clubhouse, and in Horizon City. Services will be at All Saints Episcopal Church, 3500 McRae Boulevard, El Paso, Texas, at 4 p.m., Monday, February 13. A Celebration of her life will follow at the Park East Clubhouse, 1725 Mosswood, after the service. In lieu of flowers, donations made be made to Tu Nidito (a Tucson organization serving seriously ill and/or grieving children, and their families, where daughter Teena volunteers), 3922 N. Mountain Ave., Tucson, AZ, 85719, or to a favorite charity.