



Earsel Katherine Alford Bender

1923 - 2011



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Bender*

*May 19 1923 - Jun 13 2011  
AAFA #0260*

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*THE CLARION-LEDGER*

*Jackson, Hinds Co., MS*

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

Earsel Alford Luke Bender, 88, passed away June 13, 2011, at Hospice Ministries, Ridgeland, Mississippi. Visitation will be held Wednesday, June 15, from 12:00-2:00pm at McClain-Hays Funeral Home, Philadelphia, Mississippi, with services to be held at 2:00pm in the Chapel. Interment will follow at Sandtown United Methodist Church Cemetery, Philadelphia, Mississippi. A Celebration of her Life will be held afterwards for family and friends at the home of Dezmon and Marie Alford. The Reverends Steve Bryant and Benny Alford will officiate.

Earsel was a member of the Grace Chapel Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Madison, Mississippi.

The loving daughter of William "Lace" Alford and Myrtle Copeland Alford, Earsel Katherine Alford was born May 19, 1923, in

Philadelphia, Mississippi, and raised in the Bond Community. She was the fifth of nine children.

She was married to Felton Ray Luke, on December 19, 1942, a member of the Army Air Corps. During his tour in the European Theater during WWII, Felton was shot down over the French Alps. He was rescued and nursed back to health by the French Underground, then smuggled to Spain for ultimate return to England and the U.S. During his wartime service, Earsel lived with Felton's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Luke of the Coy Community in Kemper County, Mississippi.

Upon his return after WWII, Earsel began her life as a military wife. Two daughters, Rahye Carol and Reitha Gayle, were born to this union. Air Force life involved extensive travel and relocations including Montgomery, Alabama; Syracuse and Newburg, New

York; Belleville, Illinois; Rapid City, South Dakota; Panama Canal Zone; Bermuda; Fort Worth, Texas and Dayton, Ohio. Felton died in 1964 following a lengthy illness.

Earsel married Donald L. Bender, another Air Force officer, on March 3, 1967. Don, too, was widowed and they both were very fortunate to find each other. In their 44 years together they lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico for 20 years followed by moves to Meridian, Mississippi; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Madison, Mississippi. They enjoyed traveling, bowling, cooking, gardening, camping and card games. Don has worked incessantly on the Alford and Luke genealogy and created an extensive database for family lines. He visited Earsel daily in her sickness, caring for her with all his heart.



As a mother, Earsel was thoughtful, kind and loving; her daughters loved her dearly and feel blessed to have had her in their lives. She will be missed so very much for she was always there to give advice and support as nobody other than a "Mom" can do. Earsel loved nothing more than family gatherings and on occasion when she would have everyone together in one place, memories were to be made. Whether all embarked on a camping trip in their RV to the nearby Jemez Mountains, trips cross country, visiting relatives, enjoying the holidays, or cooking a feast, she was a shining light to all who knew her and the memories she created will always be treasured.

Earsel was active in Officer's Wives Clubs, served as a Grey Lady, modeled, worked tirelessly in the Albuquerque Newcomer's Club and was a member of the Women's Professional Bowlers Association for many years. She will always be remembered for her sense of fashion and her elegant style.

Survivors include her husband Donald L. Bender of

Madison, Mississippi, daughters Rahye Carol Luke of Venice, Florida; Reitha Gayle Luke Parkin (David) of Fort Worth, Texas; Linda Kay Bender Boldt (Charlie) of Urbandale, Iowa; sisters, Evelyn Alford McCardle, Gulfport, Mississippi; brothers Tom Alford (Hildred) and Dezmon (Marie) of Philadelphia, Mississippi. Grandchildren include Angela Carol Puckett Bennett (Scott), Alpharetta, Georgia; Kristy Parkin Byers (Steve), Kelsie Katherine Parkin, Buford, Georgia; and Tony Boldt (Dawn), Omaha, Nebraska. Great-grandchildren include Nicholas and Parker Bennett, Alpharetta, Georgia; and Payton and Kylie Boldt, Omaha, Nebraska; and a host of dearly loved nieces and nephews.

Earsel was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Hubard, Howard and Austin Alford, and sisters Inez Alford Ferguson and Ellie Ree Alford Seale.

The family would like to recognize the staff at Siena 1, St. Catherine's Village of Madison, Mississippi, for their years of loving care for Earsel. Memorials in her

memory may be made to the Mississippi Alzheimer's Association, Mississippi Chapter, 196 Charmant Place, Suite 4, Ridgeland, MS 39157, or to a charity of your choice.

**AAFA NOTES:** SSDI records confirm death date of Earsel K. Bender (SS# issued in MS) but list her birth date as 11 May 1923, last residence Madison, Madison Co., MS. Her husband, Don Bender, obtained her birth certificate, which says 11 May 1923. However, they always celebrated her birthday on May 19!

We included the obituaries of her siblings Ellie Ree Alford Seale, Susan Inez Alford Ferguson, Thomas Benjamin Alford, Henry Howard Alford, and Hubard Hamilton Alford in Mississippi Obituaries.

The family of Earsel's father, William Lace Alford, is listed on the 1930 census North Bend, Neshoba Co., MS, dwelling #93:

Lace Alford	head	42	MS MS MS age 23 at first marriage
Myrtle	wife	34	MS MS MS age 15 at first marriage
Hubbard	son	17	MS MS MS
Tom	son	13	MS MS MS
Inez	dau	11	MS MS MS
Ellsie	dau	9	MS MS MS
Harsel	dau	7	MS MS MS
Austen	son	4	MS MS MS
Howard	son	2	MS MS MS

In 1920 they are next door to William's parents in Wister, Le Flore Co., OK, dwelling #138:

William L. Alford	head	32	MS MS MS
Lillie M.	wife	23	MS MS MS
Hubbard H.	son	7	MS MS MS
Benjamin T.	son	4-1/12	MS MS MS
Ines G.	dau	1-2/12	OK MS MS

In dwelling #137:

Benjamin F. Alford	head	62	MS NC TN
Rebecka C.	wife	52	MS SC TN
Gene L.	son	21	MS MS MS
Edward L.	son	16	MS MS MS
Moses H.	son	13	MS MS MS
Rubie W.	son	9	MS MS MS
Willis E.	son	7	MS MS MS



In 1910 they are in Beat 2, Neshoba Co., MS, dwelling #123:

Benjamin T. Alford	head	54	MS NC TN	second marriage, 23 years
Rebecca I.	wife	42	MS SC TN	first marriage, 23 years; 12 children, 9 living [6 here]
Vera C.	dau	17	MS MS MS	
David F.	son	15	MS MS MS	
Genie N.	son	13	MS MS MS	
Agnes L.	dau	11	MS MS MS	
Eddie L.	son	7	MS MS MS	
Moses H.	son	4	MS MS MS	
Rube W.	son	1	MS MS MS	
Mary J.	sister	28	MS MS MS	single
Stephen N. Copeland	step- father	71	SC SC SC	widower

In 1900 they are in North Bend, Neshoba Co., MS, dwelling #94:

B.F. Alford	head	42	b. Oct 1857	MS MS MS m. 22 years
R.C.	wife	32	b. May 1868	MS MS MS 9 children, 9 living
J.H.	son	21	b. Dec 1878	MS MS MS
J. ?.	dau	18	b. Dec 1881	MS MS MS

[The above 2 were the children of Benjamin's first wife, Sarah Cumberland:

John Henry and Jodie]

Lace	son	12	b. Dec 1887	MS MS MS
Susan	dau	8	b. Oct 1892	MS MS MS
Vera	dau	8	b. Oct 1892	MS MS MS
Frank	son	3	b. Nov 1896	MS MS MS

Jenie son 3 b. Feb 1897 MS MS MS [something wrong here]

Agnis dau 4/12 b. Nov 1899 MS MS MS

For more information about this family, see AAFA's published genealogy, [Known Descendants of John Henry Alford b. ca 1816 NC](#).

Her lineage: Earsel Katherine 1923 MS<sup>1</sup>, William Lace 1887 MS<sup>2</sup>, Benjamin Franklin 1855 MS<sup>3</sup>, John Henry 1816 NC<sup>4</sup>.



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About 1966