



Patricia "Pat" Dunham

September 22, 1939 - October 7, 2025

Patricia "Pat" Dunham — beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, teacher, mentor, and friend — passed away peacefully on October 7, 2025, surrounded by love. She now joins her husband of 56 years, Dr. Phil Dunham, who preceded her in death in 2016. Pat was born on September 22, 1939, in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, to Opal "Dinty" Moore and Flora Mae Covill. She graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1957 and went on to Northern Oklahoma Junior College (NOC), earning an associate degree in business in 1959. She later attended Central State College (now the University of Central Oklahoma), where she met Phil, the love of her life. They married in 1960 and built a home rooted in education, faith, and family. While raising her young sons, Steven and Scott, Pat resumed her studies and graduated from Phillips University in Enid in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. She began her career in Hominy, Oklahoma, teaching fourth grade and helping to design and launch the kindergarten program there. In 1968, the family joyfully welcomed their daughter, Shana, completing their family.

After moving to Durant when Phil joined the faculty at Southeastern State College, Pat taught kindergarten and early elementary classes in Yuba and Bokchito while continuing her own education. She earned her master's degree in reading from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and with characteristic determination, drove countless miles to attend night and

summer classes at East Texas State University, where she completed her doctorate in Early Childhood Education in 1984. Pat joined the faculty at Southeastern in 1980 and spent 23 years shaping the next generation of teachers. She pioneered innovative approaches to education, including research and teaching on brain dominance and learning, founded the student chapter of the Education Association at SOSU — which went on to win Outstanding Student Education Association in Oklahoma — and helped create the university's master's program in Gifted Education. Pat also initiated summer camps for gifted students, co-facilitated writers' conferences for young learners, and led numerous professional workshops for Southeastern and the Oklahoma Education Association. Her excellence was recognized with the Burlington Northern Foundation Award for outstanding teaching, and in 2015 she and Phil were honored together as Distinguished Faculty of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, a capstone tribute to their lifelong service to education. When she retired in 1998, Pat was named Professor Emeritus by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges, reflecting her deep impact on students and colleagues alike.

Faith anchored Pat's life as much as learning. She was a longtime member of First Christian Church of Durant, where she was active in youth programs and service. Later, she became a founding member of Community Christian Church, helping guide the congregation from its earliest days meeting in borrowed spaces to the completion of its permanent home in 2004. Outside the classroom, Pat thrived in her garden, loved "junking" for treasures, cooked with joy, and found her greatest happiness in time with family — especially her beloved grandchildren.

Pat is survived by her three children — Steven Dunham, Scott Dunham, and Shana Dunham-Compton — and by two granddaughters, Taylor Salem and her husband George, and Kendyl Jaiswal and her husband Dev; one great-grandson, Mason Jaiswal; her brother Ronnie Covill of Ponca City; and her

sister Sally Frantz of Midlothian, Virginia. She is also lovingly remembered by her devoted caregiver, Adam Kirkpatrick, who stood faithfully by her side, as well as by countless friends, extended family, and generations of students whose lives she touched with wisdom and warmth.

The family will hold a private service to celebrate Pat's life. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Community Christian Church, Durant, Oklahoma.

Arrangements are under the direction of Brown's Durant Funeral and Cremation Service.

Tribute Wall

JE

“ Jennifer Elkins-Mrs Dunham was my kindergarten teacher at Bokchito ok back in 1977 to 1978. She was so sweet and nice. She will be missed. Prayers for her family and friends.

Jennifer Elkins - October 14, 2025 at 12:32 PM

SB

“ Pat was a precious woman who loved her family, she loved her church, and she loved all people. She was a giver by nature and always saw the beauty in the simple things. She was a light in this world.

Suzy Bell - October 14, 2025 at 10:18 AM

JK

“ A more kind, more decent human could not possibly exist. She gave so much to this world. Rest in love and fly with the angels.



John Keys - October 14, 2025 at 06:39 AM

GT

“ Georgia Turner lit a candle in memory of Patricia "Pat" Dunham



Georgia Turner - October 10, 2025 at 12:21 PM

BS

“ Brenda Smith lit a candle in memory of Patricia "Pat" Dunham

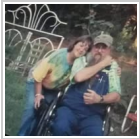


Brenda Smith - October 10, 2025 at 12:51 AM

LC

“ I had the honor of knowing Pat through Community Christian Church where we both attended service, and shared time teaching and helping guide the young kids that attended service there and joined us for VBS. She loved the children and was a cherished friend. She will be greatly missed

Lorie Collier-Allen - October 09, 2025 at 09:25 PM



“ I will never forget Mrs. Dunham. Absolutely the greatest teachers who ever lived and was loved by more kids than you could ever count. I have so many memories of her, one being her meeting my mom at the front door every day to CARRY one of my younger sisters, my only lil sister at the time, into the classroom every morning with her kicking, screaming and crying. I watched with such amazement at that kind of dedication to teaching.

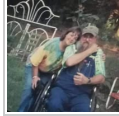
Sharon Turner - October 09, 2025 at 07:59 PM

BM

“ Mrs. Dunham was one of my favorite elementary teachers. Keeping her family in my thoughts and prayers. 🙏❤️



Brenda Mays - October 09, 2025 at 07:39 PM



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Sharon Turner - October 09, 2025 at 07:58 PM