



Milton Gardner

June 22, 1923 - August 21, 2017

Mr. Milton Frederick Gardner, Sr., age 94, passed away on August 21, 2017. Funeral Services will be held on Thursday at 4PM in the Williams Funeral Home Chapel in Milledgeville with Rev. Jerry Bradley and Rev. Larry Glover officiating. Interment will follow in Memory Hill.

The family will receive friends at Williams Funeral Home on Wednesday from 3-5 PM.

Milton was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1923 to the late Charles Arthur Gardner and Alma Whitten Gardner and grew up during the great depression. In hard times Milton's father mortgaged the family home, but could not make the payments. As a teenager Milton took a job in the aluminum plant and made the house payments himself. When the debt was paid off, his father later put the house in Milton's name.

At the start of World War, II, Milton was inducted into the U. S. Navy. Before leaving the States, he received a medal for bravery and a promotion to the rank of Corporal for diving into Boston Harbor in winter to save a drowning sailor. He then served on LST 742 in the South Pacific until the war's end.

After the war, Milton obtained a law degree from Atlanta Law School and

began his law practice in Milledgeville in 1947. In this era, defendants were often sentenced to death for offenses that did not involve a homicide. Lawyers in that time were court appointed to represent indigent defendants without pay. Nevertheless, Milton invariably did his best in many unpopular causes even though for years he was not paid anything.

Milton tried scores of murder cases. None of his clients were ever sentenced to death. In Court he had an understated style. He always said that he was not there to impress anyone, but only to advance his client's cause. His most famous client was the American Spy Pilot Francis Gary Powers, whom he represented in a divorce trial.

Milton practiced law for nearly seventy years serving as Judge of the State Court of Baldwin County, Attorney for the City of Milledgeville, President of the Baldwin County Bar Association and member of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. After 1979, he partnered with his son, Milton F. Gardner, Jr. and the two tried many cases together. In 2001, the Supreme Court of Georgia presented Milton the Amicus Curiae award for outstanding service.

Milton was also a real estate developer; he had many projects and several partnerships, most notably with his friend I. M. "Sonny" Goldstein. The firm of Gardner and Goldstein developed North Woods Estates and many other subdivisions. Despite his financial success, he lived very modestly. His frugality was limited entirely to himself; he was extraordinarily generous with other people. He would often give a hand out to anyone he thought needed help. An old man once said that Milton's hand was "always open" when somebody needs money and "the Lord will lay some money in it."

Possessions did not matter to him. Above all, he was passionately dedicated to his family. His most successful partnership was with his wife Joyce Daniel Gardner, who survives him. They were married for sixty nine years; son,

Milton Frederick "Rick" Gardner, Jr.; daughter, Gail Gardner Arnold; grandchildren, Michael J. Arnold, Daniel S. Gardner, Meredith K. Gardner, Amelia Joyce Gardner; and great grandchild Milton Gaynor Arnold, all of Milledgeville.

He was a member of Benevolent Lodge as a Master Mason and a member of First Baptist Church in Milledgeville. He was preceded in death by a sister Joyce Gardner Griffin and a brother Charlie Arthur Gardner, Jr.

Flowers accepted and for those who wish memorial contributions may be made to the Masonic Children's Home.

Cemetery Details

Memory Hill Cemetery

300 W. Franklin St.
Milledgeville, GA 31061

Previous Events

Service

AUG **24**. 4:00 PM (ET)

Williams Funeral Home & Crematory - Milledgeville
1670 N. Jefferson St.
Milledgeville, GA 31061
(478) 452-2148
staff@williamsfuneralhome.net
<https://www.williamsfuneralhome.net>

Tribute Wall

TS

“ *My thoughts are with the family, im praying for yall, mike n GG.*

Tommy scott - August 29, 2017 at 05:52 PM

PC

“ *We are so sorry for the family's loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Mike Arnold we are truly sorry for the loss of your beloved Grandad. He was a wonderful man. I'll remember him fondly. We were in Alabama for the funeral of an Uncle. If you need us please let us know. Much nd prayers. Paula and Benji*



paula cartwright - August 27, 2017 at 11:12 AM

CF

“ *May the God of all comfort give you strength, hope, and peace in sad time. He cares very deeply about the pain you feel and the loss you just experienced. Philippians 4:6,7. So sorry for your loss.*

Calandra Farley - August 27, 2017 at 08:31 AM

FC

“ *We are so sorry for your loss. He was a good man.*

I, Joann, feel honored to have worked for at one time such a highly esteemed man.

Frank and Joann Chambers

Frank and Joann Chambers - August 25, 2017 at 06:50 PM

VB

“ *Our sincere condolences to Rick and the Family.*

You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Jennifer Bacon and Vickie Brookins

vickie Brookins - August 24, 2017 at 12:47 PM



SP

“ *Mrs. Gardner, Rick and Family, I am so sorry for the loss of Mr. Gardner. He was a special friend to O.T. and myself. Will keep you all in my prayers. Love to you.*

Sheela Pounds - August 23, 2017 at 10:29 PM



LO

“ *I am so very sorry for your loss. May the fond memories of the times you shared bring you comfort and peace during this most difficult of times. We can look forward to God's promise to wipe away our tears and swallow up death forever, found at Isaiah 25:8. My deepest sympathy to you all.*

Lora - August 23, 2017 at 06:06 PM

BL

“ *Upon my swearing in to the Baldwin County Bar Association and becoming licensed as an attorney, I immediately received a long, typewritten congratulatory note from Judge Gardner. I cherish it to this day. I appreciate my friendship with his grandson, Daniel, and all the mentoring Rick has given me as well. My thoughts are with the family.*

Blanton Lingold - August 23, 2017 at 02:48 PM

FM

What a beautiful obituary for a very fine man. Flo Bloodworth Mellard

Flo Bloodworth Mellard - August 24, 2017 at 02:09 PM

CG

Our deepest sympathy to Rick and family,

The Jerry Gardner Family

Charlotte & Jerry Gardner - August 26, 2017 at 02:02 PM

JM

“ *Judge Gardner used to come and hang out with my grand daddy (PN McMulen) at his old building supply store. They always seem to enjoy each other's company. Judge Gardner & his son Rick was always good to my family. My condolences & prayers go out to his family. God Bless!*

Sincerely,

Jody & Tammi McMullen and the McMullen family.

Jody McMullen - August 23, 2017 at 01:08 PM

TF

“ *Theresa Fortner lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner*



Theresa Fortner - August 23, 2017 at 12:43 PM

EJ

“ With deepest sympathy from Ephrim Forney, Jr. & Family...



Ephrim Forney, Jr. - August 23, 2017 at 11:55 AM

AM

“ Beautifully written words. Judge will always be remembered by my family. Fondest memories of camping and getting to ride in his big motorhome listening to the "Orange Blossom Special". Bless you all during the loss of such a great man.

Love,
Amy Horton Mosely

Amy Mosely - August 23, 2017 at 11:44 AM

DW

“ The Gardner family has our prayers. We have all lost a father in Milton. His wisdom was a gift he shared, his knowledge was the kind that made you a better person.

Daniel and Sherry Wesley

Daniel Wesley - August 23, 2017 at 02:08 AM

CS

“ Carolyn Leverette-Searcy

Carolyn Leverette. Searcy - August 22, 2017 at 10:19 PM

CY

“ Please know that you all are in our thoughts and prayers during the days ahead.



Casey and Judy Jackson Youngblood - August 22, 2017 at 07:59 PM

JO

“ Joan Oxford lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Joan Oxford - August 22, 2017 at 04:57 PM

MP

“ Mandy Peacock lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Mandy Peacock - August 22, 2017 at 03:07 PM

WJ

“ Wright Banks, Jr. lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Wright Banks, Jr. - August 22, 2017 at 02:15 PM

RD

“ So sorry about the lost of *The Judge*.



Robby and Julie Deason - August 22, 2017 at 01:24 PM

LM

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you.
*Luther & Berta and Friends at Johnnie
McDade Grocery.*



LUTHER MINOR - August 22, 2017 at 12:46 PM

BH

“ *Bobbie Herring lit a candle in memory of
Milton Gardner*



Bobbie Herring - August 22, 2017 at 10:47 AM

SP

“ *Steve Pierce lit a candle in memory of Milton
Gardner*



Steve Pierce - August 22, 2017 at 10:39 AM

RS

“ Robert Smith lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Robert Smith - August 22, 2017 at 10:35 AM

LS

“ Larry And Angela Spillers lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Larry and Angela Spillers - August 22, 2017 at 09:25 AM

LS

“ Lise' Salter lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Lise' Salter - August 22, 2017 at 08:53 AM

FM

Milton was one of my favorite relatives! He was of tremendous encouragement to me during some difficulty times with his sage wisdom. He was also one of the funniest people I have known and loved to tell jokes! He will be missed.

Faye Morgan - August 23, 2017 at 05:57 PM

TM

“ Tina Greene McEver lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Tina Greene McEver - August 22, 2017 at 06:17 AM

JS

“ Rick, I am so sorry to hear about the loss of your dad. He was such a kind man. You and your family will be in my prayers.



Jane Morrison Sheppard - August 22, 2017 at 05:56 AM

JM

“ Joyce McCullough lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Joyce McCullough - August 21, 2017 at 08:32 PM

DO

“ Donna Batson Oxford lit a candle in memory of Milton Gardner



Donna Batson Oxford - August 21, 2017 at 08:28 PM

YM

“ Dear Gardner family, please know that there are so many people like me whose lives have been touched by Mr. Gardner that are sharing in your loss of such a wonderful man. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you, especially Mrs. Joyce, Rick, and Gail.

Yvette Fields MacGregor - August 21, 2017 at 08:18 PM

FB

Judge Gardner was a true southern gentleman, whose closing arguments in the courtroom are still legendary. We learned so much from him, not just law but how to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Rick, Mrs. Joyce and the rest of the Gardner family, please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers, and we hope that you are comforted by all the wonderful memories he left to you and everyone else.

Fred and Cinda Bright - August 21, 2017 at 10:33 PM

CM

Dear Gardner Family, We all are so sorry to hear of your loss. Please know that you will be in our thoughts and prayers. We pray God will give you comfort and peace in the days ahead.
The Murphey Family & Staff of Murphey Insurance Agency, Inc.

Cindy Murphey - August 22, 2017 at 12:04 PM

RH

I ONCE WAS SUED BY A LADY FOR A BILL I DID NOT OWE, I ASKED MILTON WHAT I SHOULD DO. HE SAID I WILL GO WITH YOU TO COURT FOR FREE. AFTER THE JUDGE ASKED WHAT WE HAD TO SAY MR GARDNER ASKED TO SPEAK TO THE LADY ALONE ACROSS THE HALL. THE JUDGE GRANTED THE TIME. SHORTLY THEY CAME BACK AND THE CASE WAS DROPPED. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE KNOWN WHAT MR GARDNER TOLD HER. I HOPE SOME DAY I CAN ASK HIM IN HEAVEN. I HAVE MISSED HIM AT THE OFFICE TALKING ABOUT STUFF. YALL WERE LUCKY TO HAVE HAD A GOOD DADDY IN YOUR LIFE. I PRAY HE IS IN HEAVEN NOW. RAY HARRIS

RAY HARRIS - August 24, 2017 at 08:18 AM

PT

ONCE AGAIN MILLEDGEVILLE LOOSES ONE OF ITS FOUNDING PILLARS OF LOCAL WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE. JUDGE GARDNER, AS I WAS INTRODUCED TO HIM AT MERCER'S BARBER SHOP AROUND 1973 WAS A LOCAL LEGEND. BACK THEN AND I WOULD SIT AND LISTEN TO MR HORTON, MERCER AND THE JUDGE DISCUSSED EVENTS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL IMPLICATION AND SOLUTIONS TO MOST OF THEM. OTHER LOCALS LIKE MR. OWENS, MR McCREE, JUDGE GREEN, JIMMY WATTS [EVEN THOUGH MRS. LOIS CUT HIS HAIR], MR. HARRINGTON, HAROLD FREEMAN, MR WHIPPLE TOO MANY TO LIST ALL VERY IMPORTANT TO OUR COMMUNITY. THE JUDGE HOWEVER AS I GREW UP HE BECAME A FRIEND, A MENTOR, AND A GREAT HELP TO ME IN MY LIFE. HIS WIT WAS AS SHARP AS ANYONE I'VE EVER MET, HIS WISDOM WAS ALWAYS APPRECIATED. THE STORIES HE TOLD WERE TIMELESS. OUR TALKS STARTED LOCALLY, THEN STATE ISSUES. THEN NATIONAL. I WILL MISS THE JUDGE LIKE I MISS MY DAD, ANOTHER GREAT MAN GONE, BUT WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. THANK YOU SIR .

Pedro L Tamayo - August 24, 2017 at 10:14 AM