



Frances Juanita Montgomery

November 13, 1928 - January 29, 2022

Frances Juanita Montgomery of Talihina, Oklahoma was born in Graysonia, Arkansas on November 13, 1928. She died January 29, 2022 in Sallisaw, Oklahoma at the age of 93. Frances felt she had a calling to be a nurse and she was an excellent one. After becoming an RN she joined the federal service, nursing in Indian hospitals and veterans hospitals. She first served in the Albuquerque area with the Hopi and Pueblo tribes and went from there to Crown Point in New Mexico and served several years on the Navajo reservation 60 miles from the nearest town. Wanting to be closer to her family in Arkansas, she transferred to the Choctaw hospital in Talihina. She often told the story of her arrival in Talihina. She always said that as she drove in from the west she first fell in love with the beautiful Valley, and then, as she made the curve on the highway and first saw Talihina, she fell in love with the town. As she began work at the hospital, she said she had fallen in love with the Choctaw people and felt like she had come home. She made dear friends with many of the people she worked with at the hospital whether they were nurses, housekeeping, kitchen or maintenance workers. After her daughter graduated in Talihina, her work took her to White River, Arizona where she worked some years with the Apache. She transferred from working with the Federal Indian Bureau to working for the Bureau of Veterans Affairs. She worked for a while at the VA hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado, but again, getting homesick for Oklahoma she came to work at the veterans hospital in Muskogee where she was the evening supervisor in the cardiac care unit. When she had only

three more years to work before qualifying for her pension, she applied to come back to the hospital in Talihina because she said it was where she had been the happiest in her life and bought a home. She was happy for the Tribe when they were able to take over the running of the hospital, but unfortunately it would not count toward her pension, so she rented out her home in Talihina and worked her last years in Tahlequah with the Cherokee. As soon as it was possible for her to retire she rushed back to Talihina. She did private nursing for a while and then she joined the Area Agency for Aging and worked as an ombudsman for six or seven years at the nursing home in Talihina, a speaker to reconcile any complaints of the residents. When she was no longer able to work she turned more of her attention to animals. She had always had dogs and cats but now she worked hard to see that no animals near her suffered. She took them in and fed and nursed them: dogs, cats, chickens, birds and the occasional duck. Frances was a baptized Christian, had a deep faith in God and she prayed and read her Bible everyday. Unfortunately her last year had to be spent in a nursing home in Sallisaw Oklahoma, where her daughter lives.

She was survived by her daughter, Rita Davis Milam of Sallisaw, Oklahoma and two grandchildren Dawn Elaine Parker and her husband Keith of McKinney, Texas and Jared Everett Milam and his wife, Audrey of Beaverton, Oregon and a bonus granddaughter, Katie Redfern and her husband Jonathan in McKinney, Texas. She has five great-grandchildren, Emma, Zo and Mackenzie in Texas, and Everett and Adelynn in Oregon. The family will have a private graveside service later.

Frances has finally come home to stay.

Tribute Wall

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“ So sorry for your loss, Ms Montgomery was an awesome nurse and a great lady. I had the opportunity to work wit her on multiple occasions. She taught me so much as a nurse. She helped me navigate the nursing home in her role as an ombudsman and always had the interest and concerns of the residents, patients and people of this area formost in her indeavers. A great lady that did so much for many. She leaves a great legacy for her family! 🙏🙏💖💙

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