

# Obituary for Albert Jennings

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Albert's father was named Albert Edward Jennings; his mother was Viola Best. He had two brothers: Robert and Edward, and also two sisters: Margaret and Irene. All have preceded him in death.

Albert is survived by Trudy Jennings, his wife of 62 years. He is survived by two daughters: Donna and her husband, Rick Dunham, and Debbie, and her husband, Dennis Segers. He was preceded in death by his son, David Jennings. He is survived by the following grandchildren: Melissa, and her husband, Eric; Laurie, and her husband, Matt; Brian, and his wife, Jo; and also by Shannon. He is survived by two great-grandchildren: Allison and Holly; Albert is also survived by Jeff Milligan, whom the family count as an honorary son.

Albert Locklear Jennings was born on July 14, 1919 in Ennis, Texas, 30 miles south of Dallas. Shortly thereafter, the Jennings family moved to Aransas Pass, located on the north edge of Corpus Christi Bay.

The family first came to the South Texas Gulf Coast because Albert's father had purchased some oil leases, which he hoped would provide financial security. Unfortunately, the deal was fraudulent – the leases were located out in the Gulf – and the investment funds were lost. Nevertheless, if this move did not produce material blessings for the Jennings family, in time, it indirectly contributed to untold spiritual blessings in the lives of countless others.

Physical danger soon followed financial disaster. When Albert was only six weeks old, [an unnamed hurricane](#), which meteorologists count as the fourth most intense and deadly storm of the 20th century, struck Corpus Christi. After raking the Florida Keys on September 9-10, this storm continued moving slowly westward through the Gulf. Ten vessels were lost at sea, accounting for 500 of the 800-900 deaths. On September 14, the center came ashore just south of Corpus Christi, where tides rose 16 feet above normal, and another 287 lives were lost. The Jennings family, living at Aransas Pass, on the dirty side of the storm, were very fortunate not to be counted among this number.

As water continued to rise, Albert's father realized his family's peril. Ordering his children to "Hold hands and don't let go!" Mr. Jennings led his family forth into the storm. Locked hand-in-hand, with the women holding the babies, they waded through waist deep water until they reached higher ground.

The family was evacuated to central Texas until emergency recovery efforts were complete. Afterwards, the Jennings moved from Aransas Pass to Sinton. Albert's father labored as a railroad engineer, until he was injured; afterwards, he managed a grocery store, until opening one for himself.

Albert met Trudy at the church of Christ in Sinton 1939. Known to us as "Trudy," called "Nannie" by her family, Sister Jennings maiden name was Gertrude (Gerty) Vivilene Miller. An older sister in the congregation counseled the teenage girls, saying, "If I were you, I would set my eyes on that Albert Jennings." Along with her companions, Gerty's initial response was, "Albert Jennings?? No!! He's too old!" Despite the age difference (at the time, he was twenty and she was in her early teens), romance eventually blossomed. Afterwards, this same woman warned against the impending wedding, saying, "But Gerty, you can't marry Albert; he's so old!"

Albert voluntarily joined the Air Force in August of 1942, serving his country during the Second World War, first as a communications specialist, and then as a supply and service officer. He retired from military service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

When Albert Jennings and Gertrude Miller were married on June 2, 1945, in Lubbock, Texas, he was 26 and she was 20. At the time of their wedding, Albert was stationed in New Mexico, and the Miller family was in Sinton, Texas. He was granted a three-day pass to get married. Being approximately half-way in between, Lubbock became the site for their nuptial celebration. Travelling alone from Sinton to Lubbock, Gerty experienced unanticipated excitement on the trip – the bus on which she was riding caught fire. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but not until she arrived in Lubbock did she learn that her wedding dress was undamaged.

Although no family was present for the ceremony, the resulting union was filled with love. Albert and Trudy shared 62 years of wedded bliss. Donna and Debbie remember their father as one who was very romantic, especially on birthdays and anniversaries. On one such celebration, Albert stuck 60 post-it notes around the house, declaring the many ways that he loved his wife.

After their wedding, Albert and Trudy lived together in Las Vegas for one month. However, the war intervened, and in August of 1945, Albert was transferred overseas. He travelled to Greenland, the Virgin Islands, Casablanca in Morocco, Tripoli and Egypt in North Africa, India, and then, finally, to China, where he served as captain and director of supply and services in the Chang Yi province. If you were fortunate to spend much time with Albert, (for he was a great storyteller), you heard varied tales of his army experiences, including moments of intrigue and danger, and his interesting interactions with a certain Chinaman of some importance named John Wellington Wong.

After the War, Albert and Trudy returned to Sinton. Trudy worked in a store, and Albert labored for a short time in a Department store. Donna Lynn was born on March 27, 1947. In 1949, Albert began preaching part-time at Aransas Pass and also at Beeville. Albert operated various businesses. In May of 1951, they opened Jennings 5 & 10 Cent Store.

During the Korean conflict, Albert was called back into military service. Thankfully, he was not transferred overseas, but was stationed stateside at Tendall Air Force Base in Panama City, Florida. Albert's wife and daughter remained in Sinton from 1951 until 1953, when the family was reunited in Florida. During this time, brother Jennings began preaching on Sundays for a congregation in Panama City. He also preached for the Lord's church in Quincy, Florida. Located approximately 100 miles away and one time zone to the east, the Jennings family had to leave home very early in order to arrive in Quincy in time for morning services. Such sacrifices were freely made for the cause of Christ.

In July of 1953, the Jennings family moved back to Sinton, Texas. Once again, they operated a Five and Dime store. Trudy's mother ran the store while they were in Florida.

Later that year, the Jennings moved to Refugio, where Albert began preaching full-time. He labored with the local congregation from 1953 until 1959.

Their second child, Debbie Sue, came into this world on April 16, 1954. She was born in Sinton because Trudy wanted to use the same doctor that delivered Dona. Albert David joined the family in September 26, 1958; he was also born in Sinton.

In 1959, the Jennings family moved to Goliad, where Albert preached until 1961. Afterwards, they moved to Edna, where Albert preached from 1961 to 1967.

The Jennings family moved to Yoakum in 1967 where he preached until 1972. When the family was preparing to move from Edna to Yoakum, Debbie – then age 13 – asked, “Daddy, why do we have to move?” Her father simply replied, “Because I can do some good there.” This answer comforted and satisfied Debbie, and she did not object any further. Such was Albert’s approach toward life. Fulfilling the divine injunction of Micah 6:8, which says, “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (KJV).

In 1972, they moved to Alvin, Texas where he ran Derby’s Western Store. Later the name was changed to Cattleman’s Western Store. Industrious and honest, talented and trustworthy, Albert was a successful business man. Cattleman’s Western Store, with its resident walking-horse standing beside the road, has been a fixture in Alvin for the past 36 years.

For nearly thirty years, Albert has faithfully served as an elder of the Lord’s church that first assembled on House Street, and now meets at 605 East Adoue Street in Alvin, Texas. His fellow-elders, past and present, have treasured the association. Lying in intensive care, on Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> – the last day in which he could fully communicate with others, Albert focused upon spiritual concerns, saying, “The church is the important thing.”

When asked on March 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008 regarding what he considered his greatest accomplishments, Albert said that his service to the Lord came first, his family was next, and then his service to his country. “God, Family, Country” was his answer.

Albert was ever optimistic. Even during the waning shadow of his last days, Albert encouraged his family, repeatedly saying, “If there were no good-byes, there would be no hellos.”

Because his son, David, preceded him in death, and his daughters, Donna and Debbie, wear the names of their husbands, Rick Dunham and Dennis Segers, the Jennings name will not continue. Nevertheless, Albert and Trudy raised their children to be Christians; through his message and ministry, much and everlasting good has been accomplished. Because of Albert’s influence and example, the name of Christ is worn by many – by family and friends, by those near and far – and that is a work which will ever endure.

**Note:** Most of this material was compiled by Albert Jennings’ granddaughter, Lorie Dunham, based upon a conversation with Albert that occurred on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Additional thoughts were added by Mark Mayberry, drawn from his many conversations with Albert, Trudy and other members of the Jennings’ family.