

# *Laurence Bridges Gardiner*

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*AAFA #0332*

## **LAURENCE BRIDGES GARDINER Husband of Lillian Johnson Gardiner AAFA #0332**

### *COMMERCIAL APPEAL*

Memphis, Shelby Co., TN  
Tuesday, 4 October 1994

Cattle, genealogy expert L.B. Gardiner dies

By Laura Coleman, *The Commercial Appeal*

Laurence Bridges Gardiner—the longest-serving member of the Mid-South Fair board, renowned cattle expert, genealogist, philanthropist and civic leader—died at his Memphis home Sunday [October 2]. He was 88.

He died of pneumonia, said his wife, Lillian Johnson Gardiner.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Independent Presbyterian Church, where he was a charter member, with burial in Elmwood cemetery. Memorial Park (Midtown) Hinds-Smythe Chapel has charge.

Mr. Gardiner died in the Midtown home in which he was born and which his father

built. He was a great-nephew of former mayor Joseph Locke.

From the time he was a teenager, the born-and-bred city boy was interested in agriculture, particularly dairy cattle, said Mrs. Gardiner. He developed that interest into a highly successful cattle-breeding business, Pure Bred Jersey Sales Nationwide, from which he retired several years ago.

“His mother thought he’d lost his mind when he majored in agriculture and dairy husbandry,” laughed Mrs. Gardiner, who said her husband spent several years as a field man for the American Jersey Club, traveling eight Southeastern states helping farmers breed their cows before starting his own business.

Mr. Gardiner’s interest in agriculture came as early as age

12, when he first showed his pigeons at what was then known as the Tri-State Fair. Later, he served various functions for the fair and, in 1987, was honored for 70 years of service to the fair.

Mr. Gardiner was even better known as an expert genealogist. For more than 30 years, after drafting Mrs. Gardiner to join him, the Gardiners traveled across the country, tracing family histories in hundreds of courthouses.

“He loved it,” said Mrs. Gardiner. “Cow pedigrees was his business, but human pedigrees was his fun.”

Mrs. Gardiner laughed as she remembered when she conceded the long hours her husband spent on his hobby and decided to participate in his genealogical searches with him.

“We were in Florida on vacation, and an old judge found out Laurence was interested in genealogy. So he gave Laurence the keys to the courthouse. Can you imagine how much fun it was to sit in the basement of a courthouse while we were in Florida? I thought then that I’d either have to join him or kill him,” Mrs. Gardiner said with a laugh, just before she paused to note that the couple would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in December.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Mr. Gardiner was a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, the UT Development Council, the UT Benefactors Society, the Memphis Chancellor’s Roundtable, an advisory council to the chancellor of the

UT Medical School and a charter member of the UT President’s Club.

Mr. Gardiner was also a member of the Tennessee Genealogical Society, a 45-year member of the Downtown Kiwanis Club and a former director of the American Jersey Cattle Club.

He served as president of the Elmwood Cemetery Association for 17 years and was elected its first president emeritus.

Mr. Gardiner was a member of the Huguenot Society, the Memphis Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Jamestown Society and First Families of Virginians.

He was awarded the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor.

Other than his wife, he leaves no survivors. Memorials may be sent to Independent Presbyterian Church, the Gardiner Scholarship Fund of the Huguenot Society or a charity of the donor’s choice.

[http://www.findagrave.com/photos/2004/115/8674253\\_108290478616.jpg](http://www.findagrave.com/photos/2004/115/8674253_108290478616.jpg)

Photo from Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Shelby Co., TN—  
[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

AAFA NOTES: SSDI records show that Lawrence B. Gardiner (SS# issued in TN) was born 21 July 1906, last residence Memphis, Shelby Co., TN

