

**Welch, Melba Jo (Noonkester)**

1934-2021

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**Melba Jo Welch**

Melba Jo Welch, 86, of Copperas Cove, passed away Monday, Sept. 27, 2021. Funeral is 11 a.m., Friday, Oct. 1, at Viss Family Funeral Home, 1614 S. FM 116, Copperas Cove, TX 76522. Burial will follow at 3 p.m. at North Santo Cemetery in Santo. Visitation is at the funeral home one hour prior to the service.

Melba was born Oct. 15, 1934, in Stephenville, to the late Joe and Ellen Rogers Noonkester. She grew up in Lipan, where she was a tremendous high school basketball player. She holds the No. 2 all-time state scoring record by scoring 72 points in one game.

Melba later graduated Magna Cum Laude from McMurry College in 1961 while supporting her husband and raising two boys. She married Doyle Wendell Welch, the love of her life, of Santo on June 28, 1951. They spent nearly 60 years together before he passed in 2011.

Melba was an elementary educator for nearly 30 years. She received several teacher of the year awards and loved her students. Melba served side-by-side with her husband, the Rev. Dr. Doyle Welch, as he served as a pastor at many churches. She would often lead the singing and teach Sunday School.

Melba was a great storyteller and loved to laugh. She was also an avid sports fan and never missed any of her boys' or grandchildren's games. After her retirement, she moved to Copperas Cove and quickly got involved in helping at the Copperas Cove School District, mentoring teachers and selling tickets at the football annex.

Melba attended the First Baptist Church of Copperas Cove and Pidcock Baptist Church.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Dr. Doyle Welch; grandson Chad Evan Welch; three brothers, Tommy, Hershel and James Noonkester; and one sister, Donna Holloway.

Melba is survived by her sons, Gary Welch and wife, Faith, Jack Welch and wife, Carol "Suzie," Tracy Welch and wife, Sheri; six grandchildren, Joshua, Steven, Kaylee, Caleb and Matthew Welch, and Daniel Martin; great-granddaughter Madeleine Jo Welch; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Condolences may be left at [vissfamilyfuneralhome.com](http://vissfamilyfuneralhome.com).