



Lib Howard

September 12, 1926 - October 29, 2020

Elizabeth (Lib) Simmons Howard, local historian and writer, died on October 29, 2020 at the age of 94. She was a long-time resident of Fort Payne and lived for the past year at Crossville Health & Rehabilitation.

Lib graduated from Gaston High School and attended Snead Junior College. She then went to the University of Alabama where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1948 with a BA degree majoring in English and a double minor in history and journalism. She loved the University of Alabama, following their football program avidly for the rest of her life, and wore her Phi Beta Kappa necklace continually until her death.

Lib married her beloved husband, Max, of Crossville, while she was still in college. They settled in Fort Payne where Max pursued a law career and later served for many years as president of Fort Payne Bank. Lib taught school in the Fort Payne city and DeKalb County school systems for thirteen years. Her students at Fischer still remember her fondly. After fourteen years, Lib and Max were blessed with their only daughter, Beth Elaine, and Lib retired from teaching.

She then began her second career (and passion) of writing. While still a college student Lib had assisted her professor, James B. Sellers, in writing the first of two volumes of his book, History of the University of Alabama. Her contribution was to write the section on sports since Sellers was not a sports fan. Later, her first complete book was The Vagabond Dreamer published in 1976 which told the story of Milford W. Howard, who built Howard's Chapel in Mentone. Lib eventually wrote and had published nearly twenty books mostly on local history. Two of those books, The Vagabond Dreamer and The Legend of Buster Duggan are now in their second printing. She also wrote A Corporal's View of World War II about Fred W. Purdy after convincing him to preserve his memories in print. Lib was editor of several volumes of The DeKalb Legend, trustee and editor of Landmark News, and editor of Who Was Who in DeKalb County. She continued to write a newspaper column for the DeKalb Advertiser until she was no longer able to see the keys on her electric typewriter, and regretfully had to retire while leaving at least one manuscript

unfinished. Judy Brown, her good friend of many years, helped to organize and compile her writings.

A devoted church and community servant, Lib was a member of the Fort Payne Methodist Church since 1949. She served as Secretary of the Administrative Board, was the church's first female trustee in the 1970's, and was a member of the church's Arts and Crafts Circle which at one time met at her home. She was a charter member of the North Alabama United Methodist Church Historical Society.

Lib had a life-long passion for politics and history and was not shy about expressing her views. She never missed a chance to vote during her long life. She was a charter member of the American Political Items Collectors, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Because of her interest in history, she belonged to the Alabama Historical Association, for which she wrote and read many papers at their annual meetings. She was a co-founder of the Landmarks of DeKalb County Museum.

Her awards included the Landmarks Service Award, the Award of Merit and the Distinguished Service Award from the Alabama Historical Commission, a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History, a Certificate of Appreciation from the Fort Payne Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Rose Award.

Lib loved traveling and visited many countries with her husband Max during their marriage. She also loved flower gardening, rock and arrowhead collecting, reading, fly fishing, cats, and children. She generously shared her home cooked vegetables and cornbread with many neighborhood children who often came to visit at supper time. Lib's feisty, courageous, and independent spirit will be greatly missed by all her beloved friends, her civic colleagues, and, of course, her family who must now say goodbye to the grandmother, great-grandmother, and aunt who will continue to inspire them through her memory.

She is survived by her grandson, Max James Cooper (Raleigh), and great-grandsons, Uriah James Cooper and Koran Wyatt Cooper of Opelika. She is also survived by nieces, Margaret Kerns Weaver of West Chester, PA; Susan Simmons Wright of Rainbow City; Dr. Jeanne Simmons Clayton of Hillsborough, NC; Marsha Hooks Polivnic of Clearwater, FL; and nephews, Kenneth A. Hooks, Jr. of Greenbriar, TN; John Mack Simmons of Rainbow City; Steven Howard of Auburn; Richard Barnhart Howard of Pinetop, AZ; and Mark Wayne Howard of Gadsden.

She was preceded in death by her parents, John M. and Ethel Gilchrist Simmons; her brother, John Mack Simmons (Elaine Tarpley Roberts); her sisters, Eleanor Frances Kerns (Wayne L. Kerns); and Maurine Ethel Hooks (Kenneth A. Hooks, Sr.); her husband, Max James Howard; her daughter, Beth Elaine Howard Cooper; and her nephews, James Michael Howard and Scott Jerome Simmons.

Thank you to Judy Brown for her friendship to our entire family. She provided transportation, ran errands, and delivered countless home cooked meals to Lib over a period of many years. Our family was fortunate to have her nearby as a selfless caregiver when we could not be there. Lib was blessed to have her housekeeper, Mary Ellis, who served her for over 50 years and remained a friend long after her retirement. Thank you to the Crossville Health and Rehabilitation staff, especially Bethany Hughes for being her friend, nurse, and adopted daughter. We will be forever grateful to her for her loving care and support.

Visitation will be held at the Wilson Funeral Home on November 4 at 1:00 with the service beginning at 2:00. Pallbearers will be Tommy Guice, Chris Boggs, Peyton Greenwood, Bud Davis, Vincent DiNardi, and Tom Robinson. Private burial will follow at Glenwood Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Landmarks of DeKalb County, Fort Payne Methodist Church, or any charity of your choosing.

Wilson Funeral Home and Crematory of Fort Payne is in charge of arrangements.

Events

NOV **Visitation** 01:00PM

4

Wilson Funeral Home

3801 Gault Ave. N, Fort Payne, AL, US, 35967

NOV **Funeral Service** 02:00PM

4

Wilson Funeral Home Chapel

3801 Gault Avenue North, Fort Payne, AL, US, 35967

Comments



“ Lib was a special friend, and a very special person. Her contributions to Landmarks are too numerous to list. People for generations to come will learn about our history as it was recorded by Elizabeth Howard in her many books and other writings, all done before the days of researching by computer. She traveled the county interviewing people and then writing their stories.

Many of her books are in their second printing and can be purchased from Landmarks.

Julia Brown



Julia Brown - March 12 at 12:15 AM



“ Cheryl Little lit a candle in memory of Lib Howard



Cheryl Little - November 02, 2020 at 01:49 PM