

Obituary

Born: Sunday, May 25, 1919

Died: Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Blanche Amelia Hobson George

Blanche H. George passed away June 16, 2015, at North Mississippi Medical Center Hospice, Tupelo, Mississippi. She was born May 25, 1919, in Houlka, Mississippi to Leland Curry and Amelia Patterson Hobson, she was 96.

Blanche grew up in Houlka as the fifth of six daughters: Ernestine, Hulet, Leland, Mildred and Emma Sue. Curry was a farmer and kept a small grocery store in downtown Houlka. Amelia was a mother, a frugal housekeeper, a gardener and an amazing cook. The Hobson girls were known for their athleticism—they even had their own basketball team.

In May of 1937, Blanche graduated from Houlka High School as the class president, beginning her role as a leader, which would continue her entire life. One week later she married Hershell Owen George of Pontotoc, at the Baptist parsonage there. One Saturday night about a year before, Blanche had gone to the Joy Theater, which was owned by her uncle, Grady Cook. Hershell worked there taking tickets—he took her ticket that night and the rest, as they say, is history. After they were married, they moved in with Hershell's parents, Clannie and Lula, who lived across from First Baptist Church on Washington Street.

WWII came and Blanche followed Hershell to Camp Shelby, where he was stationed prior to deployment. When Hershell left for Europe, Blanche moved back to Pontotoc and began working at the ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service), where she would remain for 49 years. Hershell returned from the war and resumed work for Mr. Cook, this time at one of his other enterprises, the Pontotoc Progress. They purchased 197 West Oxford Street from Dr. Theodore Rayburn, where Blanche resided until her recent illness. In 1947, she gave birth to her only child, Hershell O. George, II.

Blanche was an active member of First Baptist Church of Pontotoc for 78 years. It would be impossible to list all her church activities here, but among the notable ones were: Running the Junior Level (ages 9-12) of Sunday School with Hershell Sr. for decades, inspiring and influencing generations of young people. In 1973 they published a small book of original devotionals, "This is the Day," many containing magic tricks (Hershell was an amateur magician) and humor, which they had developed over the years for the children. She coached the children for Bible Drill competitions, taking great pride in their successes. Blanche was an alto in the choir for over 50 years and an active member of the Fannie Brown group of the Women's Missionary Union. In the early 90's she was a spearhead of the renovation of the sanctuary, commissioning the cross and crown tapestry and the chalices for the front of the space.

When Blanche started her long career at ASCS she just did "whatever they told me to do" around the office. She moved up the ladder to clerk, then chief clerk, overseeing the allotments of crops for all of Pontotoc County. When her boss, Bud Treloar, died unexpectedly, Blanche was tapped to take his place. She traveled to Ohio to obtain a college equivalence degree required for her promotion and in 1974 she became the first woman in the state named a County Executive Director of an ASCS office. She was active both in the state and national associations of ASCS employees, attending yearly conventions and developing life-long friendships. She retired in 1989.

Civic responsibility was also a priority for Blanche. She was a 60 year member of the Women's Club, and the Garden Club. She always enthusiastically participated in the Bodock Festival, one year dressing as a WWII nurse. She was a member of the Tuesday Two-Table Bridge Club, and was a passionate and skillful bridge player well into her nineties. After retirement she joined Toastmasters, and true to her style, became a leader in the North Mississippi groups. The Women's Club honored her 90th birthday in 2009 with a reception at the Pontotoc Public Library, a plaque for 60 years of service and the Pontotoc Chamber of Commerce and mayor declared it "Blanche George Day."

Always vivacious and outgoing, Blanche was in the center of things, if not the lead. She was a meticulous dresser, always with the right outfit, with just the right accessories, which in the 70's earned her the nickname, "Nancy Regan." It has been said that she didn't go out for the paper without putting on her makeup, which was true. Miss Blanche loved flowers. She grew them, and arranged them beautifully, honing her skills for decades by producing a new floral centerpiece each week for Junior B Sunday School. She especially loved her roses, tending them with care. She specialized in harvesting and using what she called "roadsidia"—wild flowers growing along roads and abandoned (and not-so-abandoned) homesteads. She had many

friends and close bonds with those who worked with her, including her housekeepers over the years, particularly Lilly Mae Hobson, of Houlika, who shared her last name and hometown.

In her last years, she was lovingly cared for by her "second son," David Hattox, son of her best friend and neighbor, Ethel Hattox. David's attentive care enabled Blanche to stay in her own home until her recent illness. For this, she and her family are eternally grateful.

Blanche was preceded in death by her parents, Curry and Amelia; all her sisters: Ernestine, Hulet, Leland, Mildred and Emma Sue; and her husband Hershell, Sr. She is survived by her son Hershell O. George, II, his wife Margaret and their children, Katharine and Christopher, all of Bronxville, NY.

Services will be held at First Baptist Church in Pontotoc on Friday, June 19, 2015 at 2:00 PM with Pastor Ken Hester and Father Taylor Moore, retired from St. Peter's Episcopal, Oxford, presiding. Interment will follow immediately in the Pontotoc City Cemetery. Visitation will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM Thursday, June 18, and from 12:30 to 1:30 PM on Friday, before the funeral, both in the church fellowship hall. Baldwin Nowell Funeral Home of Pontotoc is in charge of arrangements. Active Pallbearers will be Donnie Benjamin, Mike Dillard, Billy Montgomery, Buddy Montgomery, Mike Simon and Tommy Wood. Honorary Pallbearers are not named, but you know who you are.

Miss Blanche loved flowers, so there will need to be some, but also suggested, in lieu of flowers, are donations to the First Baptist Church Elevator Fund. Please send contributions to: First Baptist Church, 31 Washington Street, Pontotoc, MS 38863, attn: Blanche George Remembrance.

Condolences may be shared at www.baldwinnowellfh.com/admin

Service Summary

Visitation

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Thu Jun 18, 2015

First Baptist Church

31 Washington St
Pontotoc, MS 38863

Funeral Service

2:00 PM Fri Jun 19, 2015

First Baptist Church

31 Washington St
Pontotoc, MS 38863