



Mrs. Hortense Hayes Cooper

April 28, 1919 - September 18, 2017

Obituary for Hortense Hayes Powell Cooper

Hortense Hayes Powell Cooper passed away peacefully on Monday, Sept. 18, at age 98. Born before women could vote, daughter of a suffrage activist, wife of Tennessee Gov. Prentice Cooper, and mother of three sons, she devoted her life to family, Tennessee politics, historic preservation, and the well-being of her community. Hortense was born on April 28, 1919, the second of three children to Margaret Hayes and Ferdinand Powell of Johnson City, TN. Her family tree included James Robertson, a Nashville founder, Randal McGavock, an early Nashville mayor, and Adelia Acklen, who built Belmont Mansion. Hortense was inspired by her mother, a voracious reader and strong Democrat (honored at Margaret Hayes Powell Park in Brentwood), and she graduated from Sweet Briar College and completed graduate study at Peabody. She taught high school Spanish and was trained to fly airplanes for the military as her service during World War II. She was one of the very first employees of the United Nations in New York, and that work took her to post-War Paris and Cuba in the 1940s. In 1939, she met her future husband, Tennessee Governor Prentice Cooper, when she helped host Tennessee Day at the New York World's Fair. They married in 1950, after his stint as U.S. Ambassador to Peru (1946-48), in a service at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York. The couple moved back to Shelbyville, Tennessee, where they raised three boys on a steady diet of books, Democratic politics, and purposeful travel. Their sons are William, now a Nashville attorney; Jim, the U.S. Congressman for Nashville, Cheatham and Dickson Counties; and John, a Metro Councilman-at-Large for Davidson County. After her husband died, in 1969, Hortense again worked at the United Nations, and was stationed in Vienna, Austria. She then returned to Shelbyville as a tireless volunteer and businesswoman. She served on the Board of the Ladies' Hermitage Association for twenty-five years, and on the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Tennessee Humanities Council. She loved Nashville's Review Club, Centennial Club, International Study Club, and the Thursday Book Club, and the River Bend and Belle Meade Country Clubs. She was committed to patriotic societies like the Colonial Dames, DAR, and the American Legion Auxiliary. A lifelong Episcopalian, she attended Shelbyville's Church of the Redeemer and Nashville's Christ Church Cathedral. In 2004, Hortense moved to Richland Place in Nashville, within a

mile of her three sons and six grandchildren. She hosted her family for lunch every Sunday until a week before her death. She is survived by her sons, William, Jim (Martha), and John (Laura), and her six grandchildren: Mary, Jamie, and Hayes (Jim and Martha); and John Powell, McGavock, and Crockett (John and Laura). Her family thanks her team of exceptionally skilled and kind caregivers, led by Robbie Anderson of Paducah, KY., and the staff at Richland Place.

Visitation will be held at Christ Church Cathedral on Friday, Sept. 22 at 1 p.m. with funeral to follow at 2. Burial will be at Jenkins Chapel outside of Shelbyville at 5 p.m., with a Shelbyville visitation at 6 p.m. at Feldhaus Memorial Chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations should be made to the charity of your choice.

Comments



“ The name Hayes struck me as I came from two lines of Hayes through my grandmother Salle Belle Hayes Allen of Kentucky and Evansville, Ind. Working now on my family tree information for my extended family I realize there are lots of Hayes out there I'm related to through her family. James Alford Hayes, and Jerimiah Hayes were the last family Hayes before she married Walter Allen. I am Mary Jo Klinkel of Murfreesboro Tn. Formally from Nashville.I'm on Ancestry.com.

Mary Jo Klinkel - September 21, 2017 at 12:45 PM



“ Elaine Drake lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Hortense Hayes Cooper



Elaine Drake - September 20, 2017 at 05:48 PM



“ Hortense was a mentor to me. We had a lot in common as we both married men who were much older and had three boys who attended boarding school. Our children plus Amy Boyd Mark's children participated in a touch football game always the Friday after Thanksgiving.

We enjoyed the Thursday Book Club and attended The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer and served on the Vestry. In addition, we enjoyed Sunday (after church of course) lunch at River Bend CC.

When she moved to Nashville she left a void in my life and the Shelbyville community. I missed her and still do. However I understood the need for her to be close to family. I have had her on my prayer list and think of her often.

Elaine Tonsmeire Drake

Elaine Drake - September 20, 2017 at 05:44 PM



“ Brenda Wilson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Hortense Hayes Cooper



Brenda Wilson - September 20, 2017 at 08:00 AM



“ Anna Clanton lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Hortense Hayes Cooper



Anna Clanton - September 19, 2017 at 04:18 PM