Sossoman
Funeral Home & Crematory Center
5th Generation Family Owned & Operated Since 1949.



Julia Ross Lambert Thayer

May 15, 1929 - Oct. 14, 2021

Born May 15, 1929 in Asheboro NC, Julia Ross Lambert Thayer was the daughter of family Dr. Waite Leonidas Lambert, and schoolteacher Julia Ellen Ross Lambert. Her husband of 68 years, Cleveland Harper Thayer, passed away on August 26, 2020. Her passion for education, art, travel, her church and her family was abundantly evident during her full and active 92 years.

Julia graduated from the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, currently UNC Greensboro, with a degree in history. She later served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Alumni Association and the Reynolds Scholarship Committee. She taught in the Danville VA school system from 1952-1953 and then taught history at Danville's extension of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. She studied further at UNC Asheville, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Appalachian State University.

While raising her family she aimed her considerable creativity at, among other things, producing elaborate Halloween costumes. One year, the three children dressed as Captain Hook, Peter Pan and the alligator. Laurence valiantly sported an impressive green paper mache head with a long snout. Julia's Christmas ornaments were crafted in loving detail, whether of painted wood or baked salt dough.

She enjoyed times with her close friends, sometimes arranging trips with them

focusing on art, architecture and culture. Her sense of color and composition were displayed in her arrangement of family photos, as well as prints and paintings, in her home. She surrounded herself with pleasant memories and pleasing art.

As a member of the Morganton Service League, Julia volunteered as a reading tutor and art history teacher in Burke County middle schools. She also taught social

studies at the Children's School, arranging inspiring one-day field trips to museums in locations as far-flung as New York City, Washington DC, Chicago, Plymouth Rock, St. Louis and Philadelphia. She was president of the local chapter of the American Field Service, and as a member of the Quaker Meadows chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she chaired the History Essay contest for ten years.

Julia served on the Morganton Recreation Commission. When the tennis craze hit Morganton in the '70's, she was swept up, donning her tennis dress to play doubles. Her husband Harper was an avid tennis player, as well as canoeist, and she joined him on many a paddling day trip--no camping for her.

Combining her love of travel and her enjoyment of doing a variety of things out-of-the-ordinary, she arranged trips such as one in which her family were the only apparent Americans manning a canal boat in the middle of France, cranking iron wheels to flood the locks. There were also exploits exploring the ruins at Knossos on Crete during a frigid March, canoeing inn to inn on the Connecticut River, and taking an evening raft trip to observe beaver and bald eagles on the Snake River, to name a few of the adventures she arranged for her family.

From 1955 when she and her family moved to Morganton, Julia was a faithful member of Grace Episcopal Church, serving as Secretary to the Vestry, an officer in Episcopal Church Women, a Sunday school and vacation Bible school teacher, advisor to the youth for twelve years, and serving on the Altar Guild for 50 years. In recognition of the church's 150th anniversary in 1996, she wrote a detailed history of the 23 stained glass windows. She and her husband Harper were instrumental in the creation of a memorial garden dedicated in 1997, for which they gifted a Celtic cross and where their ashes will be interred. It comforted them to know that their final resting place would be their longtime church home.

Julia is survived by her three children: Cleveland Harper Thayer Jr. and his wife Janet

Lyn Thayer of Pacific Grove CA; Laurence Lambert Thayer of King George VA; and Julia Ross Thayer Henderson and her husband Robert Paul Henderson Jr. of Dedham MA; by her five grandsons: Drew Cleveland Thayer and his wife Lillian Pine Hancock of Denver CO; Reed Wells Thayer of Davis CA; Paul Thayer Henderson of Los Angeles

CA; David Lambert Henderson and Patrick Harper Henderson of Boston MA; and by her great grandson Baxter Huntington Thayer, son of Drew and Lillian.

The family extends their deep appreciation to Dr. David Abernathy MD, the caring staff at Grace Ridge Retirement Community and to dedicated and compassionate caregivers Kim Bingham and Sandie Collier.

A private interment will be followed by a celebration of life at Grace Episcopal Church at some future time.

Memorials may be directed to the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Garden Fund, 303 S. King St. or to the Library Fund of Burke County, 204 S. King St., both in Morganton NC 28655.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements. Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting www.sossomanfh.com.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.