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Martha Ann Guthrie Hemphill

May 3, 1934 - June 4, 2022

Martha Ann Guthrie Hemphill, 88, of Morganton, NC, passed away Saturday, June 4, 2022.

Born in Gaston County, NC on May 3, 1934, she was the daughter of the late Robert Nelson Guthrie and Martha Pearl Kennedy Guthrie. Martha was a member of North Morganton United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Hemphill is survived by her sons, William Max Hemphill, Jr. (Brenda) and Matthew Dantzler Hemphill; daughter, Kennedy Hemphill Cogan (John); grandchildren, William Max Hemphill III, Ian Kennedy Hemphill, Elizabeth Anne Cogan, Lucinda Kathleen Cogan and Aidan Hemphill; and sister, Bobbie Frances Guthrie Ross.

In addition to her parents, Martha was preceded in death by her husband, William Max Hemphill Sr.; and brother, Robert Nelson Guthrie, Jr.

Mrs. Hemphill was a graduate of Pfeiffer University and the recipient of a Master's in Education from Appalachian State University. From the time she relocated back to her husband's birthplace in Burke County, Mrs. Hemphill was an active and civic-minded member of the community. She cared deeply for the people and the place where she and Max had decided to settle down and start a family. She taught first as

where she and Max had decided to settle down and start a family. She taught first as an English teacher at Glen Alpine High School and worked subsequently for the State of North Carolina, specifically at the Developmental Evaluation Center. Almost immediately, she began to weave in her commitment to this newfound home. She set about becoming “the woman who broke all the rules…” as she was later referred to by Beth Ammon, a staff writer at the local newspaper, The News Herald. She served as

the first female Chairperson of the Burke County Board of Education (in this role she both signed and awarded her eldest son his high school diploma); the first female Chairperson of the Burke County Board of Commissioners and a member and Chairperson of the Trustees of Western Piedmont Community College. She was named the Burke County Woman of the Year in 1983 for the many ways in which she had served the people of Burke County. At some point, she decided to take a slight detour in her professional life by bringing her energy to non-profit work, where she worked as the Executive Director for the American Red Cross for both Burke and Caldwell Counties and ultimately, Childcare Connections, Inc. just before retirement. Above all, Mrs. Hemphill was committed to her family and friends. She was a crack bridge player and always a good sport. In retirement, she and Max loved to travel and did so as often as they could, to far flung places like Jerusalem as well as places closer to home.

A celebration of Martha’s life will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, July 23, 2022 at North Morganton United Methodist Church. The family will greet friends following the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to North Morganton United Methodist Church, Burke United Christian Ministries, or the American Red Cross.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.