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Orpha Louise Austin

March 17, 1937 - March 30, 2023

Orpha Louise Austin, 86, died Thursday March 30, 2023. She was the only child of Cecil Robert and Rubie Webb Austin who preceded her in death. She was a graduated of Grapevine High School in Grapevine, Texas. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degree in English from the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas. Louise retired from Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton, NC as Director of Human Resources. Previously her career was in education at the University of Dallas and Texas Woman's University.

Louise will lie-in-state in Murray Hall at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church Monday, April 3, 2023 at 11 am. A funeral Mass will be held at noon on Monday, April 3, 2023 at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Morganton, NC with Father Kenneth Whittington officiating. Louise will be buried in Melbourne, KY at St. Anne Covent Cemetery.

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

Tribute Wall

Louise is my cousin on my daddy's side of the family. Louise is 10 years my senior therefore, when she started college, I was only in elementary. I remember her putting up with me a couple of days in the summer each year. I asked so many questions. After her parents passed away, I kept track of Louise thru another older cousin, Betty Lou. Eventually as I was graduating high school, she had graduated college and our paths didn't cross again, regretfully. Now I know where she is and I will see her again one day.there's

—Barbara Webb Faries

I replaced the position Louise filled during her tenure at WPCC, but I did not replace her! Before Louise retired, we had a couple of weeks where our employment at WPCC over lapped and she showed me the ropes as I was getting my feet wet. After I told her my husband, Danny, was from Texas, it won me some points, and it was on. She lit up and embraced me like we had been long time friends. The short time I worked with her, I realized she was intelligent, well read, loved traveling with friends, and her faith was important to her. On her last day working, she told me I could call her if I had any questions, but only the first three questions would be free! She had a sense of humor, and I will always remember her laugh. Thank you, Louise for your friendly guidance to me as I began my career at WPCC over 23 years ago. Rest in peace.

—Lisa H. Sessions

Louise, you were such a fun, smart, adventuresome, feisty friend! Mother loved

spending time with you and talking about southern literature. I will always remember the fun we had travelling together in Hong Kong, Thailand and Spain!

—Mary Charlotte Safford

Louise and I were colleagues at Texas Woman's University in the late 1970s. Louise, our special friend for nearly 50 years, will be missed. Russ & Mary Bayne Ocean Springs, Mississippi

—Russ & Mary Bayne



Oh my, sweet Louise -- but sometimes contentious with some of us working at WPCC. I know she remembered me. I provided Louise her first (and only?) motorcycle ride. We cruised around Morganton and (briefly) on I-40.

—Larry Clark

Louise Austin was the first person I met when I came to Western Piedmont Community College to submit my application for a teaching job there in 1983. She was kind and made me feel welcome even though I was an applicant still in graduate school. Over my 13 year tenure at the best place I ever worked, we had so many wonderful conversations about so many things. Each year the Social Sciences Travel Club would host a chili cook off as a fundraising event. She and I had a bet going that any chili made in North Carolina couldn't come close, in her opinion, to the fire in Texas chili. I will never forget the day during the cook off as she sat tasting my chili. Perspiration began to slowly bead on her lips and slide down from her brow and saturate her chin. I said, "well how is it Louise?" She smiled wiping her face with her napkin and conceded that I had indeed won the bet. She gave the club an extra donation and polished off another bowl. Over the years she would travel to several foreign countries with Mary Charlotte Safford and me as we took students and community folk abroad. She was a dear travel companion, very well read and had a thirst for knowledge, history and culture of all kinds. Though I haven't seen her in years, she will always hold a special place

in my heart, when I look back over my formative years as a faculty member at Western Piedmont Community College. There amongst the best friends that. I have ever had. Rest in Peace Louise! Ralph

—Ralph Soney