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Virginia Frances Gibbins Barksdale

Feb. 11, 1925 - Jan. 26, 2018

Virginia Frances Gibbins Barksdale died January 26, 2018 at Grace Ridge Retirement Community in Morganton, North Carolina, two weeks before her 93rd birthday.

She is survived by her son, Lewis Barksdale of Kanazawa, Japan, her son, John Barksdale and his wife Noriko Barksdale of Ann Arbor, Michigan, her daughter, Helen Barksdale Walker and her husband Ray Walker of Morganton, North Carolina, and her son, Andrew Barksdale and his wife Anne Price of Charlottesville, Virginia, and her six grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, John Oscar Barksdale, her daughter-in-law, Akiko Moritomo, and her three sisters, Marian King Nix, Margaret Nystrom, and Helen Cox.

She was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana, and graduated with honors from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) in 1945. In 1951 while earning her M.A. from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia, she met and married seminary student, John Barksdale. Only one month later, they traveled by freighter to post-war Japan to serve for seventeen years as missionaries. She and her husband went to Japanese language school in Kobe, Japan, and then lived on Shikoku Island and in Tokyo. Over the years, she made the transpacific

lived on Shikoku Island and in Tokyo. Over the years, she made the transpacific voyage several times in tiny cabins with small children in diapers. Living on a missionary budget, she sewed her toddlers' clothes from donated material and homeschooled her not-completely-cooperative older sons. In 1967, due to her dream and planning, the family of six returned to the U.S. traveling by plane and train across Cold War-era Russia, Poland and East Germany, then purchasing a VW Microbus,

camp stove, and a tent in West Germany for a camping tour of Europe. Memories were made: the moon over the Adriatic Sea, the snowy Jung-Frau in the Swiss Alps, a ruined castle beside the Rhine River.

After returning to the U.S., she and her family settled in Nashville, Tennessee, from 1968 to 1973, during which time she earned a master's degree in library science from George Peabody College for Teachers. Later moving to Clarksville, Arkansas, where husband John became associate professor at the College of the Ozarks, she became one of the first wave of women ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and served as pastor of Dardanelle First Presbyterian Church of Dardanelle, Arkansas. After moving to Virginia in 1978, she served as pastor, along with husband John, at Madison Presbyterian Church, and on her own at Gordonsville Presbyterian Church, Waddell Memorial Presbyterian Church near Rapidan, Virginia, and Romney Presbyterian Church in Romney, West Virginia. Later, in 1994, she and John re-entered missionary work to serve together for a year as interim pastors at Kowloon Union Church in Hong Kong. She enjoyed this additional year of service and found it fulfilling.

Virginia was a skilled writer, and in the 1970s, contributed a monthly column to the *Presbyterian Survey*, writing movingly of family and everyday struggles. Her sermons were insightful on an emotional level and connected effectively with her listeners. She loved gardening, bird-watching, her book club, her friends and family. She had an endearing way of abandoning herself to laughter or tears, and her caring home was filled with sympathy and joy.

Her family would like to thank the wonderful staff at Grace Ridge for their care, and especially Mrs. Janie Knapp, for making her last years more healthy and happy

especially Mrs. Janie Knapp, for making her last years more healthy and happy.

A memorial service will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 Rugby Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903 at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 18, 2018.

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

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.