



LILLIAN PUTNAM HOWARD

April 29, 2020

Lillian Putnam Howard, age 96, of Hueytown, Alabama, left her beloved family to be with our Lord on April 29, 2020.

She was an active church member throughout her life and served in many leadership capacities, including being a Sunday School teacher into her seventies. She was a lifelong member of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Hueytown. She was a woman of great faith who filled the lives of her family and many friends with love and joy. She will live in our hearts forever.

Lillian Putnam Howard was born in Akron, Ohio, and came to Hueytown with her family in the mid-1930s. In 1947, after World War II, the family started a successful business, Putnam's Florist, which was to flourish for 34 years as a family owned and operated establishment.

While in the floral business, Lillian Howard and Putnam's Florist became well known in throughout the country. She received numerous awards and much recognition for her ability as a floral designer. She was the first woman in Alabama to be awarded the prestigious "Florist of the Year" award and the first woman in Alabama to be invited to join the American Academy of Florists.

She appeared and competed in shows across the United States and also served as commentator for floral design schools and shows. She won a

national competition in Hawaii which was attended by 3000 florists from across the nation. She participated in a New York City program coordinating flowers and foliage with the famous Boehm Bird collection. Her arrangements were displayed with period furniture in the Henry Ford Museum.

She was invited to participate with 109 other floral designers from across the United States in coordinating the floral decorations for the Presidential Inauguration of Ronald Reagan. She and her sister took part in decorating the Washington Hilton Hotel as well as other hotels and buildings where 13 balls and 2 galas were held.

Lillian Howard ran for Mayor of Hueytown in 1988 after having served on the Hueytown City Council from 1984-1988. She easily won the election becoming the City's first woman Mayor since its incorporation in 1960. She was re-elected in 1992 over two male contenders without a run-off. She chose to retire upon completion of her second term.

She came to City Hall with the same enthusiasm, tenacity and determination to do the best job possible for her city as she did in the floral business.

During her years as Mayor of Hueytown, she served on various committees, including the Economic Development Board, which wrote policies and made recommendations to elected officials in Montgomery. She served on the Board of the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission and was a member of the Emergency Management Agency Committee, a committee of five mayors who worked closely with the Jefferson County Commission to restructure the agency. She also served as President and Vice-President of the Jefferson County Mayors Association. She continued to be an avid supporter of better education and reform, and she attended every meeting possible related to these areas. She also took an active part in the Arts and served as a Director on the Birmingham Summerfest Board. She was nominated as one of the Top

Ten Business Women by the Birmingham Business Journal.

On April 19, 2007, she was given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the City of Hueytown Chamber of Commerce in recognition for her outstanding accomplishments and for her dedicated service to the community. She was the fifth recipient of this prestigious award.

She was married to George Leland Howard. They had 3 children, Gary Lee Howard and twin daughters who died at childbirth. Eighteen years later her husband went to be with the Lord. After more than ten years had passed, she married John Roberson, who is now deceased. She was preceded in death by her mother and father, Velma and Ezekiel Rice Putnam, sisters Louise P. Hodges and Nelda Mae O'Neal and nephew Walter Cruse.

She is survived by her son, Gary Lee Howard, daughter in law, Diana Ivone Gonzalez, and grandson Christopher George Howard. She is also survived by her nieces Roxanne Blake (Clay) and Mary Beth Klauke (Mike), great niece and nephew, Misty Winslett and Clint Brown.

She was a truly talented and unique person who had the clarity of mind to walk with kings but not lose common touch as she gave of herself and shared her love with all of those she encountered. We love you and will miss you and you will always be remembered as you are part of our hearts forever.

There will be a private graveside service Saturday, May 2, 2019, at Pleasant Ridge Cemetery.

Tribute Wall

BA

“ Gary, Diana, and Christopher,

I am just now finding out about Lillian's passing. My condolences to all of you. Lillian was a dear, dear, lady! After dad passed, both my sisters, June and Sandra, passed from cancer. It's been incredibly difficult and I apologize for losing touch.

Bobi

Bobi Arnold - May 26, 2020 at 04:51 PM

WP

“ Our thoughts and prayers go out to Miss Howard's family. And thank you for all your sacrifices for our community.

Wes Passmore - May 03, 2020 at 04:07 PM

NW

“ I just today heard about Lillian's death, and was so sorry to hear it, Gary. You know, you and your mom and dad and all the Putnams lived just down the street(s) from me and my family for many, many years. Lillian would often drop in here at our house when she was passing by, and if we were eating, she pulled up a chair and ate with us. Just one of the family. I enjoyed those times. She was a very dear person, and talented in so many ways. You and family are in my prayers.

Norma Wade - May 02, 2020 at 05:36 PM

DD

“ Mrs Howard was my second mother during College and Medical school. She taught me how to balance a career with being a wife and mother. I loved sitting at the kitchen table and hearing her words of wisdom. I can hear her say my name and remember how comforting it was to hear her steps down the hallway at the Howard home. I loved her mashed potatoes—I’ve never been able to achieve the texture she whipped up. She and Mr Leland allowed me to go with them on family vacations, floral conventions, meals at Joy Young and Ollie’s.

They helped me realize that each person we meet is important and becomes part of the fabric of our lives. Thank you Gary for allowing me to be a part of your family. Your mom wanted me to call her Lillian but I had so much respect for her that I could never do that. Love to your family.

Daveta Best Dozier

Daveta Dozier - May 02, 2020 at 03:47 PM

DH

“ Lillian was a mentor and a friend. She shared with me her love of flowers and of people. Not only did she hire me at Putnam’s when I was just 14, she also provided my daddy’s funeral spray a year later.

Gary, your mom was a very special lady, and I know many people were blessed by knowing her. I was, for sure.

Denise Haskins - May 01, 2020 at 09:03 PM

DA

“ I am very sorry, Gary. Your mom and dad were very kind. I have many fond memories of both of them.

David Allen

David Allen - May 01, 2020 at 03:35 PM

DK

“ *Mayor Howard was a very special lady and it was pleasure to have known her. I worked City Hall while she was Mayor, she treated employees well and she was proud of City. She was hardworking Mayor and talented lady. To the family, I am sorry for your loss. Cherish the precious memories spent with her.*
Debbie Kuykendall

Debbie Kuykendall - May 01, 2020 at 10:48 AM

RH

“ *Renee Holcombe lit a candle in memory of*
LILLIAN PUTNAM HOWARD



Renee Holcombe - May 01, 2020 at 10:09 AM