



## Eugenia Holder Wilcox

February 17, 1923 - March 26, 2016

Eugenia “Jeanie” Holder Wilcox died peacefully on March 25, 2016 at age 93. She was a 73-year resident of Oak Ridge.

She was born in Newport, TN on February 17, 1923 to Ina Mae and Hugh Robertson Holder.

After graduating from Virginia Intermont, she came to Oak Ridge in 1943 to join the efforts of the Manhattan project in the security department where she rose to become a Division Secretary.

She married William “Bill” Wilcox Jr. in 1946. They had three children – Kitty, Bill and Martha – and she was actively involved in their education, sports and activities. She was a member of the PEO society to support education, actively involved in the PTA, a supportive room mother and tireless cheerleader for her children’s sports and other endeavors.

The Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge Hospital was her life-long avocation and vocation. She began as a volunteer in 1962 when she helped set up the gift shop. In 1972, she was asked to become their first Director of Volunteer Services, and she formalized and organized an effective volunteer program for the hospital, made up of Gray Ladies, Pink Ladies, Candy Stripers and Gift Shop sales people, all of whom provided helpful service to ease the lives of patients and their families. She created new programs such as Patient Representatives and the Lifeline program, and trained hundreds of new volunteers in the intricacies of hospital volunteer work. After 17 years at the helm, she retired from the director position and became a volunteer again. She continued volunteering regularly until 2011, though she never stopped sharing her caring spirit with any visit to the hospital. In total, she served the hospital for more than 49 years.

She was an active member of St. Stephens Episcopal Church, serving in the Women’s

Auxiliary in all positions including president in 1960. She helped found a vital church kitchen organization in the 1960s called "The Sisters of the Skillet," and she headed and supported several fundraising Christmas Bazaars for the church.

She was a constant support to her husband in their work to preserve the history of Oak Ridge. As a member of the 43 Club (whose membership is made up of those who lived in Oak Ridge in 1943), she had great stories to tell about the early days of the Secret City.

She was an avid bridge player, and was in three clubs that lasted more than 50 years. She enjoyed entertaining friends and family, spending time at her lake cottage, having breakfast at the Jefferson, cheering for the Lady Vols and bringing smiles to people with her jokes.

After the death of her husband in 2013, she moved to Canterfield, where she thrived in their caring, entertaining and supportive community. During her first year there, she won the Volunteer of the Year award in recognition of her lifelong commitment to volunteering. She benefited from the supportive care of director Kathy McCameron and the staff and community at Canterfield as well as from the compassionate dedication of Ronald Brabson and the many thoughtful caregivers from Home Instead.

Throughout her adult life, she was dedicated to and uplifted by the supportive community of Oak Ridge.

She is survived by:

Brother Hugh R. Holder and his wife Phyllis Holder.

Sister-in-law Sue Reed Wilcox.

Daughter Kitty Wilcox Soldano and her husband James Bennett Soldano.

Grandson James Wilcox Soldano and his wife Alison Guest Soldano.

Great grandchildren James Guest Soldano and Grace Bliss Soldano.

Granddaughter Jennifer Soldano Purcell and her husband Brian Robert Purcell.

Great granddaughter Bennett Caroline Purcell.

Son William Holder Wilcox and his wife Elizabeth Louise Todd.

Grandson William Benjamin Todd Wilcox.

Granddaughter Ellen Elizabeth Todd Wilcox.

Daughter Martha Minor Wilcox and her husband Robert Francis McIntyre.

Grandson Robert Wilcox Pickle and his fiancé Hana Marie Beckerle.

Step grandson Matthew Robert McIntyre and his fiancé Joanna Kahler.

And countless nieces, nephews and friends whose life she touched, and whose lives blessed hers.

The funeral will be held at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Oak Ridge on April 9 at 2:00 p.m. A reception will follow in the parish hall.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Stephens Episcopal Church of Oak Ridge or ADFAC

(Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties).

# Comments

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“ I was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Jeanie, and although I had met her children when they were small, I don't know them as adults and didn't really know how to reach them. I thought the world of Jeanie. She had the worlds best sense of humor and it was a stroke of genius for the hospital to place her in charge of volunteer services because of her personality. She was genuinely interested in others and was just delightful. Everyone loved her. She simply made the world a better place by being there. I send deepest sympathy to all the family. Connie Adams

**Connie Adams** - April 14, 2016 at 10:32 AM

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“ Both Bill and Jeanne were amazing, giving people! It was an honor and privilege to know them. They showed, in many ways, great love for the community and their friends! They will always be remembered--and greatly missed.  
Our thoughts and prayers are with their family,  
Bob and Carol Smallridge

**Carol Smallridge** - April 09, 2016 at 06:30 PM

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“ Bill & Bett & Family,  
Our sympathies and prayers to you and your family at this sad time. Your mother was a fixture in her pink volunteer coat at the hospital over the years and she would always make a point to visit whichever of my family was in the hospital. We enjoyed seeing both of your parents at church and the connections we had. She was an amazing woman and my mother never failed to point them out at St. Stephens when we would attend while visiting. Surely she will be missed but is in a happier place with Bill.  
Prayers,  
Amy Stafford Malik & David Stafford

**Amy Stafford Malik** - April 03, 2016 at 12:16 PM

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“ Dear Kitty, Martha and Bill: I extend my sincere condolences on your mother's death (still "Mrs. Wilcox" to me). It certainly is a coda to memories of growing up in the inviting trio of houses on New York Avenue that offered us the exceptional adventures and recreation in all seasons that children need (intrepid sledding from the top of the Dunigans' property to the start of the woods in our vast backyard is just one testament to our good fortune being within reach of the woods, creek, Norman Lane and other adventures (-: ). We benefited from the guidance and love of vigilant, responsible parents who helped raise us all. And how remarkable that all the mothers and dads of those three families from different places lived into their 90s; I guess Oak Ridge suited them, as well as it did all of us. I remember your mother as a warm, funny presence and a great organizer of good services for Oak Ridge. I enjoyed seeing her and your dad on my trips to Oak Ridge while my parents (Ruby and Ralph) were alive, and even after my mother died and I returned to get their house in order to sell. "Jeanie" was in great form and told a joke about golf that had us all laughing. I like to think they might all be together somewhere enjoying their memories of Oak Ridge.....Love to you all, Mary Elson

Mary Elson - April 02, 2016 at 08:02 PM

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“ Some memories stay with you forever, and in Jeanie's case, for me, it was her laugh. She had a laugh that could define laughter for all time, a laugh that proved God meant for us to be happy. 7 or 8 years ago, I did some work in the Wilcox house on NY Avenue, and I reminded Jeanie and Bill Sr. of a plaque that was on their kitchen wall when I was in junior high. I had seen it because Bill Jr. and I were buddies. The plaque depicted a family of 5... mom, dad, son, and 2 daughters... in black-n-white silhouette, except the mom and kids all had red hair. The caption below the silhouettes said "Never underestimate the power of a woman." When I told Jeanie and Bill about remembering that plaque, she laughed so passionately the walls shook.

I'm sad this world has lost that laugh, but glad Jeanie and Bill are together again.

I lost my mother on March 1st. Bill, I send you and your sisters best wishes, sympathy, empathy, and connection. Hope to see you Apr 9th.

John Job - April 01, 2016 at 03:13 PM

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“ Dear Martha, Bill and Kitty..We were so sorry to hear of the passing of your sweet mom..I often saw her at Canterfield when I was visiting my parents..I also remember what a cool mom she was when we would go to the Wilcox household when I was in high school..with much sympathy..Bob and Terry(Lenihan)Pryor..Class of '74

**Bob and Terry Pryor** - March 30, 2016 at 11:05 AM

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“ Bill...I was very sorry to read of your mother's passing. I ate many meals with her at Canterfield when my dad lived there. Your mom always kept me laughing even when the days were not so funny. I'll be thinking of you and your family during this sad time.

Becky

**Becky Kendall** - March 30, 2016 at 10:29 AM

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“ To the Wilcox Family, Jeanie as we called her and Mr. Bill were longtime members of the Oak Ridge BPO Elks Lodge and frequent visitors. Jeanie always amazed me with her wit, funny jokes and hilarious riddles she would share. She, as with Bill, will be missed by her many friends at the Lodge to which she brought such happiness and joy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

John & Tammy Calvert  
Oak Ridge

**John Calvert** - March 29, 2016 at 09:17 PM