

Cora Mereness, 92

Cora Joslyn Mereness.: 92, of Morehead City, died peacefully at the home of her daughter, Anne Joslyn Mereness Strupp of Rutherfordton, Sunday, Feb. 19, 2012, in the company of her loving family.

An informal memorial service is at 2 p.m. Thursday in Rutherfordton Presbyterian Church, where her daughter and son-in-law are members. A service of remembrance and celebration of her life is planned for 11 a.m. March 31 at her home church, First Presbyterian of Morehead City, with interment at Bayview Cemetery, on the banks of Calico Creek.

Born in Vanceboro in 1919, Cora's family moved in 1922 to Morehead City, where her father had been called in his career as an educator. Her parents, who were always a source of pride and inspiration to her, were Harvey Langill Joslyn, the well-loved principal, then superintendent of Carteret County Schools for four decades, and Anne Neal Joslyn, who lovingly taught music to those same generations of children served for 24 years as the organist and director of music at First Presbyterian.

At Morehead City High School, Cora played varsity women's basketball and graduated with the Class of 1936. She was a beautiful young woman who participated in local pageants, and led the annual Coastal Festival and Water Parade for several years in the bow of the State Flagship, and once on an aquaplane. Sixty years later at the age of 85, she gleefully went parasailing in the sky above her beloved Bogue Sound.

Cora was blessed with an independent and adventurous spirit. She enjoyed traveling and began her ventures while working as auditor for the B&M (Beaufort & Morehead) Railroad during World War II, using her rail pass to discover America. In that same era she twice chaired a county War Bond Committee, raising funds for a B-29 Superfortress bomber. She also lent moral support to the troops at the local USO dance hall, where she once won a jitterbug contest with a young officer. She continued to contribute to veterans' associations throughout her life.

In 1946, Cora married William E. Mereness, a newly retired major of the U.S. Marines, who had served in the Pacific throughout the war. He embarked on a career in publishing in New York City, eventually transferring to multiple states with his growing family. Cora's loving husband Bill died in 1997, having celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary a few months earlier.

Cora was a faithful and active member of Presbyterian churches wherever her husband's professional career took them including Morehead City; Indianapolis, Ind.; Palatine (Chicago, Ill.); Summit, N.J.; Raleigh; Madison (Nashville), Tenn., back again to Raleigh and finally home to Morehead City. She served as deacon and as ruling elder in several congregations, sang in many choirs, served as president of the Women of the Church at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Raleigh and on the board of missions at First Presbyterian of Morehead City. She was the last surviving charter member of the Morehead City church, which held its early services in her family's living room in 1929.

Before retiring and moving back to Morehead City, Cora and Bill lived for 20 years in Raleigh, where they made many lasting friendships. Cora worked for several years there in the offices of Rex Hospital and was a 37-year survivor of life-threatening cancers - an inspiration to all who knew of her struggle.

In retirement, they both volunteered at Carteret General Hospital for many years and were active in various community civic organizations, including Rotary, Daughters of the American Revolution and numerous antiques and bridge clubs. Cora also cheerfully volunteered for several years at her much-loved The History Place in Morehead City. She was a gracious hostess and friend to many who will fondly remember her warm and outgoing personality.

Cora had a great love of music and family history and instilled that love in her children. She was a devoted wife, mother of three, grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of five whom she dearly loved; Family reunions on Emerald Isle were a special part of her life. She had a positive and lively spirit, and will be remembered for her sparkle and spunk, her ready wit and her beautiful smile.

In addition to her husband of 50 years, Bill Mereness, Cora was preceded in death by her father, H.L. Joslyn; mother, Anne Neal Clark Joslyn; brothers, Harvey. Joslyn Jr. and Oscar Joslyn, all of Morehead City, and sister, Amy Joslyn MacDougall of York, Pa.

Cora made her home with her daughter and son-in-law, Anne and Brian Strupp, in Rutherfordton in the summer of 2011. In addition to Anne and Brian; her remaining family includes a son, Joseph E. Mereness and wife Hazel "Sam" of Morehead City and daughter Lindi Clark Mereness of Hotchkiss, Colo.

Her seven adoring grandchildren are Benjamin Strupp of Atlanta, Ga., Basil Webb of Hotchkiss, Colo., Will Brooks of Manteo, Joslyn Strupp Allen of Boston, Mass., Crystal Star Landes of Long Beach, Calif., Jonas Landes of Denver, Colo., and Joslyn Mereness of Wilmington. Cora's five precious great-grandchildren are Bella and Alex Strupp of Atlanta, Ga., Willow and Lilac Web of Hotchkiss, and Hallie Allen of Boston, Mass. She is also survived by a host of nieces and nephews to whom "Aunt Cora" was a treasure.

Her family will always cherish memories of her motherly strength, and her affectionate playfulness. We have lost the comfort of her presence here with us, but her spirit will remain in our hearts forever.

We extend special thanks to the compassionate caregivers of Hospice of Rutherford County.

The family respectfully asks that remembrances and memorials, if desired, be made in her name to First Presbyterian Church, 1604 Arendell St., Morehead City, N.C. 28557, The History Place, 1008 Arendell St., Morehead City, N.C. 28557"01" to any veterans' organization.

Arrangements are by McMahan's Funeral Home Inc. of Rutherfordton.