



Ora-Mae (Williams) Cheaney

August 1, 1913 - March 31, 2013

Ora-Mae Williams Cheaney, the 5th of six children born to Mary Lucy Majors and Lemuel Montgomery Williams, departed this life on March 31, 2013. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Dr. Henry Ellis Cheaney; and her siblings Lawrence, Gertrude, Henry, Myrtle and Ophelia. She was born in Henderson KY on August 1, 1913 and spent her early childhood there before becoming a long time citizen of Frankfort, KY in 1931.

Mrs. Cheaney's earliest education was provided by the public schools of Henderson where she graduated from Alvis Street School in 1927 and Douglass High School in 1931. In many ways, the special recognition and commendations accorded her in Domestic Science, as it was called in those early years, gave direction to her life in subsequent years. She moved to Frankfort for a higher education at Kentucky State College in 1931 and obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree with a major in Home Economics in 1935. In 1951 she received a Master of Science Degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, with a major in Education and a minor in Home Economics. In the years to follow, she engaged in special studies at Iowa State University, Ames, IA; the University of Kentucky, Lexington and Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA.

Ora-Mae was christened as an infant in St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Henderson and remained a loyal member there until she transferred her

membership to The Church of the Ascension in Frankfort. She could be seen frequently, however, with her husband at his church, First Baptist Church, Clinton Street.

Mrs. Cheaney's professional experience began as a Public School Teacher in a one-room rural school in Henderson County. When the small school was absorbed by consolidation in a new system, she was assigned to teach third and fourth grades. In 1937 upon the recommendation of the Kentucky State Department of Vocational Education, she was elected to the faculty of the Mayo-Underwood School, Frankfort, as Home Economics teacher. She remained in this position for 19 years. In 1957 Mrs. Cheaney joined the faculty of Kentucky State College where her specialty was Food and Nutrition. She retired from Kentucky State University as Associate Professor in 1976.

In addition to experience gained from her years in the classrooms of Henderson and Frankfort, Mrs. Cheaney served as a Critic Teacher in the Student-Training Program at KSU and helped to plan and begin The New Homemakers of America. During the years of her involvement, her students excelled and many held national offices. She became a Principal Investigator for CSRS. During the 1937 flood she gained emergency experience as a Dietitian for Refugees in her hometown.

Mrs. Cheaney's active involvement in national, regional, state and local organizations was rewarded with numerous commendations and recognitions. Her Lifetime Membership in the American Home Economics Association and The American Dietetic Association led to her engagement in research projects and to publications, early in her career, in journals such as Practical Home Economics and School Sewing Service (1941). She was District Chair of The New Homemakers of America; an active member of the Kentucky Association of Family and Consumer Scientists; made an Honorary Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture; named a Kentucky Colonel by Governor Louie B.

Nunn; received special certificates of appreciation from the NAACP, National Law Enforcement and many recognitions from her Alma Mater, Kentucky State University. She remained a loyal Life Member of the KSU Alumni Association. In Frankfort, she was a Certified Student-Trainer, an active member of the Women's Progressive Club and the Younger Women's Hospital Club known for its charity work. She was also a diligent worker with the March of Dimes and the Bluegrass Ostomy Association. Her Greek sisterhood membership was in Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority. At one time she served as a volunteer Sunday School Teacher at St. John A.M.E. Church.

Ora-Mae Williams was married in 1941 to another Henderson, KY native, Dr. Henry Ellis Cheaney, also a Kentucky State graduate and revered Professor of History at KSU, the University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University. No children were born to their union of 65 years. Dr. Cheaney preceded Mrs. Cheaney in death in 2006.

Ora-Mae Cheaney is survived by her late sister's daughter, Faye M. Bradshaw of Houston, TX; two sisters-in-law, Mrs. Hazel Edgerson (Paul), Henderson, KY and Mrs. Sue Cheaney Tucker and her daughter and granddaughter, all of Lima, OH; eight nieces-in-law, Henderson, KY; two nieces-in-law, Evansville, IN; one nephew-in-law, Owensboro, KY and one nephew-in-law, Henderson, KY; several cousins, George A. Ray (Nora Mae), Alma D. Flowers (George), Evansville, IN, Dorothy Terry, Henderson, KY and her son, Jerome Saunders, Cambridge, MA; along with many caring friends and neighbors.

No funeral service was held. Burial was in Fernwood Cemetery, Henderson, KY.

Expressions of sympathy or remembrance may be made to the American

Cancer Society, 701 West Muhammad Ali Blvd. Louisville, KY 40203.

Tribute Wall



“ *Ora-Mae (Williams) Cheaney*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *Mrs. Cheaney was one of my favorite professors and allowed me to interview her and write about her educational experinces for my dissertation. She was a wonderful lady and impacted many women in her lifetime. Her leagacy will live on. God bless.*

Vernell Larkin - April 15, 2013 at 09:03 AM