



Lelia Mae Rankin Brown

January 15, 1921 - May 31, 2020

Lelia Mae Rankin Brown, 99, of Piedmont, passed away at Piedmont Health Care Center on May 31, 2020.

Mrs. Brown is survived by her daughter, Ranae Coheley and her husband Jimmie of Piedmont, her son, Galen Brown and his wife Lizabeth Talbott of New Orleans, her grandsons Barrett Coheley of Anniston, Daniel Coheley of Piedmont, and her sister-in-law, Kay Brown of Anniston. She is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Brown was the youngest child of Lela Parker and John Patterson Rankin. In addition to her parents she was preceded in death by her husband, Ernest G. Brown, her sisters Cordie Estes, Lillian Doyal, Maude Anthony, Velia Upton, Vera Webb and Loretta Bishop, brothers Olian Rankin, Melvin Rankin and Lothar Rankin.

Mrs. Brown was a 1939 graduate of Jacksonville High School. After graduating from JHS, she was hired at the cotton mill in Piedmont to play basketball on the women's team with three of her sisters who were already on the team.

As a homemaker, she was actively involved in her children's activities, serving as homeroom mother, working with scouts, and serving as a band parent. She also was an excellent seamstress and made all of her and her daughter's clothes including evening dresses and majorette uniforms.

Always an avid reader, Mrs. Brown helped establish Piedmont Public Library and was employed as one of their first librarians for several years. She realized the importance of reading and strived to ensure that the citizens and students of Piedmont had an excellent library for reading enjoyment as well as performing research.

In addition to starting the library, Mrs. Brown was involved in multiple civic organizations including the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eastern Star, the Piedmont Garden Club, the Town & Country Garden Club, the Eight and Forty Club and the Red Hat Society. She and

her husband developed the first shopping center in Piedmont, Piedmont Plaza, which they owned for many years. She was also a member of the First Baptist Church of Piedmont.

After retirement, she and her husband traveled extensively to most of the 50 states including Alaska and Hawaii, to 13 foreign countries including England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Canada, and Mexico and also to several Caribbean islands.

Funeral service for Mrs. Brown will be private. Gentlemen serving as pallbearers are Michael Clarkson, James Gray, David Suther, Michael Livingston, Bobby Glover and Dennis Ragsdale. Honorary pallbearers are staff and caregivers at Piedmont Health Care Center and Legacy Village. In lieu of flowers the family suggest memorial contributions to the Piedmont Public Library, 106 North Main Street, Piedmont, AL 36272. Thompson Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Comments



“ So sorry to learn of Mrs Mae’s passing. I met her later in life, while I worked in resident activities and as social worker at Piedmont Healthcare. She and I became close as she visited her sister Lillian. She came often and became a volunteer. Something that not many people cared to do. We laughed and shared many conversations. I began to feel like I knew her 2 children. As she shared stories of travels with her husband, I would feel like I had visited myself. We would have special days for the residents and she would help serve birthday cake, transport residents to our game areas, she even dressed in her Hawaiian outfit. She brought items for the residents to hold from other countries. Later she tried to get me to join the “Red Hat” society, my schedule however prevented that, i would have gone in as pink and lavender due to my age then. I moved to another job and we lost contact. I have such fond memories of her and I can only smile thinking of her even in this sad time. Such a positive influence ,in this world has gone, we have to follow her example and never stop being involved. Ranae. And Galen she spoke of you often and with much love and pride. My prayers are with you all Tonya Pike , LBSW



Tonya Pike - June 04, 2020 at 12:05 AM



“ I grew to know and love Ms. Mae when I first moved to Piedmont in 1977 and was Debby Jones (Eddie Jones). My love for reading drew me to the Public Library where we quickly became friends. I simply can't express in words just how much I loved and admired her. Mae will ALWAYS represent Piedmont Public Library for so many of us. Such a lovely lady...inside and out. Her greatest love was her Lord...and then, her family. One of the great matriarchs of Piedmont is no longer with us in body...but always in our hearts. Debby Jones Rosser.

DEBBY ROSSER - June 03, 2020 at 05:45 PM



“ As I didn't know your mother personally, I feel as though I do know her through your expressions of love you often shared with me and talked about our mother's. You were always so thoughtful of her and took such great care of her. I know you will miss her so much, but we have the hope that Christ gives us of meeting them again in that wonderful place we know as heaven. My sympathies are sent to you and your family.

Sandra & Lamar Pettit - June 03, 2020 at 05:16 PM



“ Hilda Parris lit a candle in memory of Lelia Mae Rankin Brown



Hilda Parris - June 03, 2020 at 05:55 AM



“ Prayers for Mrs. Brown's loved ones as you face the days ahead. My fondest memories of her are the time we spent talking when I would stop by the library to check out books for my mother and myself. Her suggestions were always appreciated. She was a very special lady; always smiling, and so very kind and helpful.

Sincerely,

Towana Erwin Fuqua



Towana Fuqua - June 03, 2020 at 12:38 AM



“ Although I never met her, I knew by you talking about her and your devotion to her, she was a remarkable lady. Our prayers are with the family.

Shirley Ramsey - June 02, 2020 at 09:21 PM