



Willie Ann Harris Albea

May 28, 1922 - April 26, 2014

Willie Ann Albea of Anniston, AL died on April 26, 2014 at the Presbyterian Home of Quitman, GA at the age of 91, after a lengthy decline from Alzheimer's Disease and related complications. Willie Ann was born on May 28, 1922, was the oldest daughter, and second oldest of five children of W.C. Harris and Molly Borden Harris of Choccolocco, AL. She was the last surviving member of this family and was the oldest surviving member of this Harris-Borden extended family line, which was one of the earliest pioneer families of Benton (now Calhoun) County, Alabama. Willie Ann finished high school at White Plains High in 1939 as the valedictorian of her class. She completed her BA in education at Jacksonville State College for Teachers, now Jacksonville State University, and went on to obtain a Master's Degree at the University of Alabama. She began her collegiate education in 1939 right after high school and completed her BA in 1946 as her educational experience was interrupted by WWII. She went on to have a teaching career that spanned some 25 years with her advanced educational experiences intertwined during that interval. Willie Ann married her high school sweetheart, Emmette Harvey Albea of the Nances Creek Community in 1942 and that union produced two sons, namely, Emmette, Jr. in 1944 and Ron in 1949. This union lasted some 72 years until her death, as Harvey, Emmette and Ron (and their spouses) survive. Also surviving are four grandchildren, their spouses and a number of great-grandchildren. Willie Ann suffered a health challenge during the late 1970's and had to terminate her teaching career at

that time. This was also probably the first hint of what was to become her slow and lengthy decline into dementia. As a part of her recovery process, she began an exercise program that included walking. This progressed to jogging, then running, and then to competitive running. Her favorite event was the 10K but she also ran 5K's and even a few marathons. She traveled all over the Southeast running in events in her age group. This resulted in the winning of many T-shirts, prizes and trophies, almost too numerous to count. Some of the records she set for her age group in Alabama still stand. Willie Ann was a strong-willed, liberated woman before the Feminist Movement was invented as she worked her own way through school, had an independent career and earned her own money to contribute to the family income. At the same time, she never deviated from the "country girl" role of wife and mother that she had learned from her mother as she grew up on the family farm in the Choccolocco Valley. In addition to her family, her career, and running, her other passions were gardening (both flowers and vegetables), rockhounding, and her several collections which included stamps, coins, books, dolls and match boxes. She was also a long-time member of the Anniston YMCA, was a founding member of the Anniston Runners Club and the Coosa River Track Club. She had also served as a Pink Lady at Anniston Memorial Hospital for several years and was a Life Member of the NEA. In addition to Harvey, her other best friend was her younger sister Mary. Willie Ann grew up in the Harmony Baptist Church of Choccolocco, which is one of the oldest churches in the valley. She accepted Christ there at an early age and was baptised in Choccolocco Creek. She has also been a past member of Parker Memorial Baptist Church of Anniston and a member of other Baptist Churches where her family resided at the time. She was also a member of The Upper Room of Anniston for several years. A brief memorial will be held at Thompson Funeral Home on Thursday, May 01, 2014 at 2 p.m. with burial to follow at the Nances Creek Community Cemetery. The family will receive friends Thursday from 12-2 p.m.