



Malvina McCollum "Vina" Rahlfs

June 17, 1918 - May 15, 2019

Malvina McCollum "Vina" Rahlfs, age 100, passed away on May 15, 2019 at Memorial West Hospital in Bessemer, Alabama. Vina was born on June 17, 1918 in Birmingham, Alabama to Malvina Howells and Thomas J. McCollum. Her family soon moved to Bessemer, Alabama where Vina attended Bessemer Public Schools and graduated from Bessemer High School. In 1940 she graduated from The University of Alabama with a Degree in Education. At the University, as a member of Phi Mu Sorority, she served as president of Alpha Zeta Chapter for 2 ½ years. She also served on the Panhellenic Council and was a member of Blackfrairs. After attending night classes at Birmingham Business College, she received certification as a comptometer operator. For a short time, she worked in the office of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company. Later she earned a master's degree in education from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. Other certifications were received in the Carden Reading Method and the Montessori Method of Teaching. For many years she conducted teacher training classes in the Montessori Method. Her first teaching assignment was at Raymond School in Raymond, Alabama which began a teaching career that spanned 52 years. Teaching assignments in Midland were at Travis School, Trinity School and Midland Montessori School. At Trinity School, Vina served as head of the lower school for 12 years. Vina was active in many civic and church organizations. She was a member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church of Midland. She was a Lay Eucharistic Minister, member of the Alter Guild, the

Cana Guild, the Worship and Nurture Council, Vestry Member where she served as secretary, and she was a participant in Bethel Bible Study, Crossways Bible Study and Community Bible Study in Midland and Birmingham. In Bessemer she was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church. Civic interest included the Heart Association Drive, the United Way Fund Drive, and the Museum of the Southwest where she was a member of the Board of Directors and served as secretary. While at the University of Alabama Vina met John W. Rahlfs of Oakley, California. They were married in 1942 in Bessemer, Alabama. They lived in San Angelo, Texas and Denver, Colorado before moving to Midland in 1949. She moved back to Bessemer, Alabama a few years after the death of her husband. Vina was preceded in death by her parents, her husband and her first son, John W. Rahlfs, Jr. She is survived by her son, Dr. Thomas F. Rahlfs and his wife, Laura, of Houston, Texas, and her son John's wife, Linda Rahlfs of Kingwood, Texas. She is also survived by two granddaughters, Megan Rahlfs of Houston, Texas and Carries Rahlfs Brill and her husband, Max and their sons, Tyler and Travis of Friendswood, Texas; two step-daughters, Dorian Whitley York and her husband, Brian and their children, Joshua, Kate and Piper; and Lindy Whitley of Redwood City, California. In addition, Vina is survived by her long-life friend, Margaret K. Elm of Bessemer, Alabama. A Committal Service will be held at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Midland, Texas at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 13, 2019. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be directed to The Trinity Episcopal Church in Bessemer, Alabama, Midland Montessori School, Trinity School of Midland, or the charity of one's choice.

Tribute Wall

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“ I had the pleasure of being with Vina for nearly twenty years at Trinity School in Midland. It was a wonder, then and still is, how such a small frame could contain such a huge reserve of energy, knowledge, wisdom, love, joy for life, and other attributes and virtues. I would have been happy to sit at her feet for years just absorbing all she had to share with those around her. A favorite memory of mine is the first time I visited her home and saw a portrait of a ‘16 year old Vina’ hanging in her living room. Fifty years after it was painted there was very little change in the regal young lady depicted in the portrait and the charming, lovely lady who opened her home to me. Vina and Johnny are two people who have no equal and will continue to be an inspiration to everyone who holds memories of them.

Cheryl Sellars - September 17, 2021 at 10:53 AM