



Mary Elizabeth Tilson Baird Brown

February 7, 2010

Mary Elizabeth Tilson Baird Brown died Feb 7, 2010, in Duluth, GA. She was preceded in death by her sisters, Nancy Jane of San Francisco, CA and Adele May of Rochester, NY, her first husband Justus N. Baird Jr, and her second husband, Thomas Brown Sr. Born Nov 26, 1917, in Springfield, IL, she was the daughter of Hazel Montgomery and Delbert Mayo Tilson. She attended high school there and played cello and piano in the orchestra. She attended Missouri Valley College, but graduated from Teachers Training College in 1940 (now Washington University in St Louis, MO) with a double major in deaf education and speech therapy. She accepted a position as tutor for a deaf child and spent a year in CA with that family. She married Justus Baird, Jr, Sep 10, 1940. She was a teacher at the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, and he was a chemical engineer at Monsanto. They moved to Sudbury, MA and then to S. Acton, MA for several years where they farmed a half acre and had three children. They moved to Kingston, TN in 1951, and she shortly began teaching at Kingston Jr High, and then taught in Harriman City schools for 15 years. She entered graduate school and completed an MA in Special Education from the University of Tennessee. She was a member of The teachers honorary fraternity Delta Kappa Gamma. She taught music in the home the entire time, as well as school. She was the organist for Bethel Presbyterian Church for 20 years, as well as a deacon and elder. She moved to Philadelphia in 1970 with her husband and taught there until the couple retired to Kingston in 1977; her husband died in 1978. She married Thomas

Brown, Sr in 1982, accepting 4 stepchildren into her life in a loving way. She obtained her real estate license and bought houses that she leased to people for below market rates. She was President of Harriman Kiwanis Club for some time, attended their national conventions, and traveled in Europe. She was active in the First Presbyterian Church of Harriman and organist there for many years. She contributed time and money to many worthy causes: she was a founder of the Michael Dunn Foundation, which supports the Michael Dunn School in Kingston, and she founded an endowed scholarship fund at Lincoln Memorial University, from which she received an honorary doctorate in 1997, being hooded by her son. Three students a year now go to college thanks to her and her husband. She is survived by her three children, Justus Baird of Alpharetta, GA, Barbara Baird of Harriman, TN, and Deborah Ries of Lexington, KY, and 4 step children, Tom Brown of Des Moines, IA, George Brown of Harriman, TN, Betty Whitney of New Haven, CN, and Mary Margaret Johnson of Florida. She has 6 grandchildren and 9 step grand-children, as well as 4 great grandchildren, and 7 great step grandchildren. Visitation will be from 6-8 pm, Feb 10, and funeral services will be at 10:00 AM Feb 11 at Kyker Funeral Home in Harriman, with interment at Roane Memorial Gardens. Donations are appreciated and should be directed to the Baird-Brown Scholarship fund at Lincoln Memorial University of Harrogate, TN, or the Michael Dunn Foundation of Kingston, or the Bethel Presbyterian Church building fund of Kingston.

Tribute Wall

LP

“ Betty Baird Brown was my first and third grade teacher at Walnut Hill Elementary in Harriman. She was a wonderful teacher and a very good and kind person. She will be missed by many.

Linda Wade Powell - February 10, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ George, so sorry to hear about your Mom passing on. Of course she is in a much better place than we are. We are thinking of you.

Stormy Gunter - February 10, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ I remember your mother/stepmother, as well as both her husbands. Fine people all. She contributed greatly to the Roane County community. My condolences to all of you.
Mark Barker
kingston

Mark Barker - February 09, 2010 at 12:00 AM