

OBITUARIES



LONGEST

MOUNT AIRY — Mrs. Lorene Graham Longest's faith was perfected when she went home to Heaven, to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on March 18, 2010. Mrs. Longest was a native of Salisbury and she was the descendent of some of the first settlers of Rowan County, on both the paternal and maternal sides of her family. Born Oct. 24, 1918, she was the only daughter of the late Walter Alexander Graham Sr. and the late Irene Drye Graham. Also preceding her in death were her only brother, Walter Alexander Graham Jr.; and her sister-in-law, Sarah Grubb Graham. Mrs. Longest is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 66 years, Frank Alexander Longest Sr. of Mount Airy. Honoring her memory are her son, Frank Alexander Jr., and daughter-in-law, Lee Winstead Longest of Burlington; and her daughter, Barbara Longest Raynor, and son-in-law, R.J. Raynor of

Rocky Mount. Also surviving are one grandson, William Alexander (Alex) Longest of Atlanta, Ga.; and two granddaughters, Meredith Ashton Longest of Boston, Mass., and Blair Kendal Raynor of New York, N.Y. Mrs. Longest is survived by three sisters-in-law, Martha Longest Tuttle of Rocky Mount, Katherine Longest Klemovich of Leawood, Kan., and Mary Teachy Longest of Rose Hill; and many dear and special nieces and nephews. Mrs. Longest graduated from Borden High School in Salisbury at the age of 15. Mrs. Longest was a proud member of the Class of 1938 at Catawba College in Salisbury, where she received a B.S. degree in business administration and accounting. While at Catawba, she was a popular student and at the end of her senior year, she was elected May Queen by her classmates to preside over the traditional May Court and May Day festivities. After graduating from Catawba, at the age of 19, Mrs. Longest accepted a teaching position in Troy teaching what were then known as the commercial arts. She taught at Troy High School from 1938 until the fall of 1940 when a friend convinced her to take an open teaching position at Mount Airy High School. Many of her former students still remember "Miss Graham" with fondness and many of her former students are now prominent Mount Airy citizens and one famous North Carolinian, Andy Griffith was also one of her former students. It was in Mount Airy that she met the love of her life, Frank Longest, and they were married at First Baptist Church in Salisbury on May 22, 1943. While Mr. Longest was stationed overseas, during World War II as a captain in the U.S. Army Air Corps., Mrs. Longest returned to Salisbury to live with her parents and she taught school in Rowan County until the end of the war. After returning from his wartime service overseas, Mr. Longest joined his father's expanding lumber and wholesale grocery businesses, and he and Mrs. Longest lived briefly in both Smithfield and Weldon. In 1949, they decided to return to Mount Airy, when Mr. Longest was asked to resume his pre-war executive position with Mount Airy Furniture, formerly Mount Airy Chair Company; also, Mr. and Mrs. Longest longed to return to their beloved and adopted hometown of Mount Airy, surrounded by the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. After her marriage to Mr. Longest, Mrs. Longest gave up her teaching career to assume the honored role of homemaker. Mrs. Longest was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, who was devoted to her family, church and community. She instilled a love of history, a deep appreciation for the cultural and fine arts, the importance of good manners, proper etiquette and the development of Christian values,

good character and ethical behavior in her children. She was a true Southern lady, who strived to do things with grace, dignity and decorum, but at the same time, she wanted everyone to have fun and enjoy themselves. Mrs. Longest was an active member of the community, until her health began to decline two years ago. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy for more than 60 years, where she had served in several capacities, in the WMU, on the Diaconate, and numerous church committees. She was a faithful member of the Dorcas Electa Sunday School Class and the Hensley Mission Circle. She was a past member and officer of the Mount Airy Woman's Club, a past volunteer with the Red Cross Blood Mobile, Meals on Wheels and past part-time librarian at the Mount Airy Public Library. Recently, she was serving on the Board of Directors for the historic Moore House, the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation and as a volunteer docent at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. She was a North Carolina History Museum Associate for many years and enjoyed the local meetings as well as participating in numerous statewide functions. She was a member of the Surry County Historical Society, the Surry Arts Council and Cross Creek Country Club. Mrs. Longest loved to spend time with her friends playing Contract Bridge, and she was a dedicated member of two long-standing ladies bridge clubs. Also, Mrs. Longest was a voracious reader and an avid crossword puzzle and word game enthusiast. The family would like to thank the loving, caring, devoted and faithful staff of Ridgecrest Assisted Living and Retirement Community of Mount Airy, where Mr. and Mrs. Longest have been residents since the fall of 2008. The staff went above and beyond the call of duty in their loving care of Mrs. Longest during the last months of her declining health. The family would also like to gratefully acknowledge the outstanding, gentle care, support and assistance of the staff of Mountain Valley Hospice of Surry County. God has truly used them all to touch our lives in so many ways. We are eternally thankful for everything they all have done for our family. The Celebration of Life service for Mrs. Longest will be held on Sunday, March 21, 2010, at 3 p.m. in the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Mount Airy with Dr. Roger Gilbert officiating. Visitation with the family will be one hour prior to the serv-

ice, in the Fireside Room, at First Baptist Church. Burial will be in Oakdale Cemetery in Mount Airy. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the First Baptist Church, 714 N. Main St., Mount Airy, NC 27030, or to Mountain Valley Hospice and Palliative Care, 401 Technology Lane, Suite 200, Mount Airy, NC 27030. Moody Funeral Home in Mount Airy is assisting the Longest family. Online condolences may be made at www.moodyfuneralservices.com