



Bernice Levenson Lerner

October 22, 1930 - June 5, 2010

Bernice Levenson Lerner, 79 of Salisbury passed away June 5, 2010 at her home.

Mrs. Lerner was born October 22, 1930, in Salisbury, North Carolina. Her parents were Rose and Phillip Shraga Levenson.

She attended Wiley Elementary School, and graduated as the valedictorian of her class at Boyden (now Salisbury) High School class of 1949,. She graduated Summa Cum Laude – with highest honors, including Phi Beta Kappa, from Duke University in 1953. She moved to NYC where she met her soon to be husband Mort Lerner.

She is preceded in death by her husband Morton “Mort” Lerner; two dear sisters, Gladys Bondy and Annette Korman; and recently by the other member of the family, Rosina Clement Howell, the housekeeper and “other mother,” who passed away just 2 days prior to Mrs. Lerner, at age 91.

Those left to cherish her memory three children, Richard Irvin Lerner of Greensboro, Mark Harris Lerner of Boston, MA, Dena Phyllis Lerner of Van Nuys, California, and one granddaughter Marley Rabon Lerner.

She was a hostess of annual National Sportscasters and Sportswriters

Association cocktail parties, entertaining Jesse Owens, Micki King, Dan Gurney, Keith Jackson, Jim McKay in her home. Also Mrs. Lerner was President of the Lerner Shoes, the corporations which started as Family Shoe Store by her father, which later became Phil's Shoes and the Rack Room. She was an avid golfer and member of Salisbury Country Club. Mrs. Lerner also made annual generous gifts to Catawba College, Livingstone College, Wake Forest University Medical School, the Charleston Jewish Federation, Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, Temple Israel in Salisbury, and Hurley Park. She and her late husband endowed the Organ Transplant program at Wake Forest University Bowman Gray School of Medicine, and at Catawba College, created the Rose E. & Philip S. Levenson First Family Scholarship to honor her parents. She also donated a workshop at Salisbury's Waterworks Art Center in memory of her mother.

Mrs. Lerner was a Lifetime member of Iron Dukes, the Duke University Athletic Fund, as well as the Cameron Wade Society. With her husband she was named University of Pittsburgh 1987 Golden Panther of the Year – to publicly recognize exceptional contributions, because she and her husband gave the first endowed Athletic scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh.

She was a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority while Duke and remained an active member of the alumni association, a member of the Duke University Founders Society, and recently endowed Lerner Family Scholarships for both undergraduates and medical students at Duke.

Mrs. Lerner and her husband also endowed a scholarship at University of Pittsburgh for the basketball player with the highest GPA. After her husband's death, she donated the Mort Lerner Wellness Center at Catawba College in his memory. The Wellness Center exists to provide opportunities for students, faculty and staff to learn about practices, conditions and habits that will contribute to their physical well-being. At the Freeman Center for Jewish life at

Duke University, she was on the planning committee, and donated the Levenson Lerner Sanctuary. She and her husband also gave the Bernice and Morton Lerner Professor of Judaic Studies at Duke University. She and her husband were on the Board of Governors for the Ben Gurion University in Beersheba, Israel, and donated the Lerner Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She traveled annually to Israel to witness to growth of this university and medical center.

Her parents were among the original builders of the Temple Israel in Salisbury, and in fact she and her husband were the first wedding there, on June 5 1954. She passed away on her 56th wedding anniversary.

The funeral service will be held Monday morning, June 7, 2010 at 10:00 AM at Temple Israel, Brenner Avenue, Salisbury. The memorial will be officiated by Rabbi Fred Guttman of Temple Emanuel, Greensboro, and will be followed by internment at City Memorial Park.

Donations, in lieu of flowers, in Bernice's memory should be made to Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre Duke University Medical Center 2200 W. Main Street, Suite A200 Box 3503 DUMC Durham, NC 27705 or to the charity of your choice.

Summersett Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.summersettfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ I have many fond memories of growing up with Bernice that I have always cherished. We learned to play bridge together, and sometimes, her father, Mr. Levenson, would join us. She was a great lady and a wonderful friend. My deepest sympathy goes out to Richard, Mark, and Dena.##imported-begin##Mary Ann Greenland##imported-end##

June 10, 2010 at 10:36 PM



“ Dena,
I remember your mom (and dad) as being so very supportive of all the things you did. She was always present for everything. You and your brothers are in my thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##John Bernhardt##imported-end##

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