



Catherine "Kitty" Huffman

May 30, 1919 - January 16, 2010

The incredible journey of the life of Catherine ("Kitty") Crawford Huffman, formerly of Salisbury, ended on January 16, 2010, in Las Vegas, NV. She was 90 years old. Kitty was born in Altoona, PA on May 30, 1919 and was told as a child that the Memorial Day parades were put on just to celebrate her birthday. She may have delighted in that as a child but, as an adult, she was one of the least self-centered and most giving people to walk the earth. After she had received The McMahon Appreciation Award in 1999 from the Foundation for the Carolinas for her 40 year legacy of community service, the Charlotte Observer quoted her as saying: "I am not at all a Biblical scholar, but when you read the Old and New Testament...you know you're supposed to care for people, to love your neighbor. And when God calls – like in Isaiah – you're supposed to say 'Here am I'". And that's just what she did.

Kitty found herself in North Carolina in 1946, after graduating from Altoona (PA) High School and working several years in Baltimore, MD. While in Baltimore, she had a blind date with Richard Huffman, a North Carolina boy, whom she married August 19, 1945. They spent their 42 years of married life in Charlotte and had two children: Marsha (husband Bob) now of Las Vegas and Dick (wife Dale) now of Salisbury. Her beloved husband pre-deceased her in 1987.

While being a fabulous, always-available mom, Kitty was also deeply involved in the community. She was a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Charlotte for 50 years and represented St. Mark's for years on the city-wide

Church Women United. During her term as president of that group (at the time limited to white, evangelical churches), Kitty spearheaded the effort to integrate the group both racially and denominationally. This was in 1955! In the 1960's she again spearheaded the drive to consolidate the two PTA groups, one black and the other white. It was a turbulent time in the nation, but Kitty quietly went about making Charlotte a better, more just city. From 1965 to 1981, she was executive director of Charlotte's chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Under her leadership, NCCJ initiated two major programs: Project Aries, training junior and senior high school students to be agents of change during segregation and a project to improve relations between local police and residents of low income neighborhoods. Her life-long work centered around fostering understanding and respect among all peoples, and the influence she had on the City will live on. She was also instrumental in the creation in Charlotte of such organizations as Habitat for Humanity, Crisis Assistance Ministry and Charlotte Emergency Housing. She served on numerous boards including, Governor's Council on the Holocaust, Women's Political Caucus, Business and Professional Women, Youth Service Action Board, Friendship Trays and Bethlehem Center. After her retirement, she was appointed to the Charlotte Housing Authority (the first white woman on the Board) and was instrumental in establishing a college scholarship fund for public housing kids.

She never really "retired" -- she would see a need and set out to fill it. When Kitty moved to Trinity Oaks Lutheran Retirement Community in Salisbury at the age of 79, she didn't stop her community involvement. Salisbury folks heard she was coming and put her right away on the boards including Rowan Helping Ministries and Habitat for Humanity.

Kitty began to suffer from dementia about five years ago, and she decided she would be most at rest moving to Las Vegas to be near her daughter. She lived at The Bridge in Las Vegas and has described her last years as "not very hip-hop but content" (really, she said that). She was a died-in-the-wool Democrat and was blessed to live long enough to vote for Obama. She is survived by

her two children and their spouses, her granddaughter (light of her life) Caitlin Hudgins of Philadelphia, her sister Ann of Steamboat Springs, CO, her sister-in-law Ann of Greenville, SC, six nieces and nephews and four great nieces and nephews. Services will be at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Charlotte on Saturday, January 23 at 11:00 a.m., followed by burial at Evergreen Cemetery on Central Ave. There will also be a memorial service at Summersett Funeral Home in Salisbury at 2:00 p.m., Sunday January 24. In lieu of flowers, kudos to Kitty's life can be made to the Huffman Scholarship Fund of UNC-Charlotte, 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223 (Kitty always regretted not having the finances to go to college. She and her husband established this scholarship fund to help students who might not get to attend college otherwise.)