



## Jimmie Meese Moomaw

January 13, 1937 - October 2, 2017

Jimmie Meese Moomaw, a noted Southern memoirist, longtime Democratic Party activist, and retired professor of communication theory, died Monday, Oct. 2 in Salisbury, N.C. Born and raised in Mississippi, Jimmie lived and taught throughout the South before settling in Avondale Estates, Ga., where she lived for 40 years before moving to Salisbury in 2014. Her involvement in Georgia politics included service as a consultant, adviser, and speechwriter to governors, legislators, and local office holders. She was also an elected official in her own right, serving several terms as a City Commissioner in Avondale Estates, including as Vice Mayor.

Jimmie Lonnie Meese was born Jan. 13, 1937 in Brookhaven, Miss., the only child of Gordon Eli Meese and the former Etta Maye Crawford. Her childhood memories were compellingly recounted in her memoir *Southern Fried Child*, including stories of living above the firehouse, traipsing around town as a young girl in overalls collecting debts owed to her father's store, and insightful reflections on a white child's experience of Jim Crow. Although she left Mississippi as a young adult, small-town Mississippi never entirely left her. Throughout her life, she was a masterful storyteller, a virtuoso Southern cook, a cunning poker player, a prolific gardener, and an avid fisherwoman. In later life, she enjoyed many extended road trips, reading from her memoir at bookstores and libraries throughout the Deep South. She was always ready to pull over for an antique auction, a laden pecan tree, or a promisingly-murky

bass pond, and she never left home without fishing poles, a tacklebox, and copies of Southern Fried Child for sale in the trunk of her car.

Jimmie was an active and devoted alumna of the Mississippi State College for Women, where she graduated in 1958 with a double major in English and Speech, and eventually served on the Board of the Alumnae Association. She began her university-level teaching career in 1960 at Mississippi State University, where she was instrumental in the establishment of the Communications Department. In forty years of teaching, she taught a broad range of communications courses, eventually specializing in Communication Theory, Persuasion, and Argumentation, retiring from the faculty of Georgia State University in 2000. In addition to her elected service, she served as an Arbiter, appointed by the Georgia Supreme Court, for twenty years. She was also a member of numerous civic and charitable boards and committees, including the Advisory Board of Directors for the Atlanta Olympic Games; Abused Women and Children, Inc.; DeKalb County's Multi-Use Senior Center; the DeKalb County Human Relations Committee; and Georgia's Judicial Qualifications Board and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. She also chaired the DeKalb County Board of Health. When she moved to Salisbury, she immediately sought ways to offer her gifts in her new community, becoming a member of the Symphony Guild, the Phoenix Readers, the Salisbury Human Relations Committee, and the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party. Most recently, she was instrumental in organizing the bipartisan group Salisbury Indivisible.

Above all her accomplishments in academia, teaching, politics, and even fishing, Jimmie was most proud of her children and grandchildren, to whom her devotion was immeasurable. She is survived by her two daughters, Amy Moomaw Goodnight of Salisbury, and Elizabeth Moomaw Peyton of Charlottesville, Va.; sons-in-law Will Goodnight and Will Peyton; and five grandchildren, Nellie May Pickett Peyton, Crawford Jackson Peyton, James

Parish Peyton, Wyatt Edmund Goodnight, and Emmaline Fleming Goodnight.

A funeral service is planned for 10 a.m. on Monday, October 9 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Salisbury. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations to St. Luke's or the Glenn A. Kiser Hospice House.

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Moomaw family. Online condolences may be made at [www.summersettfuneralhome.com](http://www.summersettfuneralhome.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT 9. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
131 West Council Street  
Salisbury, NC 28144

# Tribute Wall

CK

“ *Jimmie Moomaw was my rhetoric instructor in grad school at Georgia State in the 90's. My wife, Jann, and I occasionally encountered her around town in Avondale Estates in the years afterward. I still employ what I learned from her as a rhetorics (they call it "communications" now) teacher at Perimeter College of Georgia State University. She and I have taught Aristotelian rhetoric to over 10,000 students! A great lady! Sorry to hear that her voice is now stilled... Bob Knowles (MCo 1996, Georgia State University)*

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**Colonel R Knowles** - October 07, 2017 at 02:58 PM

CH

“ *My deepest condolences to the family of Jimmie Meese Moomaw. I sure will miss her stories, and the next fish I catch.....will be fried up just the way she liked them. Jimmie, I sure know the fishing is good for you now.*

*Cissy Blalock Hanemayer*

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**Cissy Blalock Hanemayer** - October 05, 2017 at 07:54 PM

PB

“ *Jimmie was one of the best storytellers I ever knew. I have enjoyed reading Southern Fried Child when I wanted to get closer to my own small town southern roots. I am sure that all of her family will miss her as much as her family at NDPC miss her. She was one in a million!*

*Tricia Bryan*

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**Patricia Bryan** - October 04, 2017 at 10:35 AM

KS

“ I used to clean Jimmie house for a year. She be friend me right away. We sat and had some many talks And could sit there for hours talking to her. I enjoyed going to her house. She gave me a copy of her first book for my birthday and I cherish it to this day. Was looking forward to reading her second book. She was a very special lady. She has made a place in my heart. And will be greatly missed. I so sorry for uhh our loss. Karie scott

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**Karie scott** - October 03, 2017 at 05:23 PM