



Mrs. Phyllis Adele Allen Martin

December 17, 1924 - May 26, 2018

Phyllis Adele Allen Martin, former executive director of the Rowan County Literacy Council, entered peacefully into eternal life on Saturday, May 26, 2018.

Born December 17, 1924, she was the daughter of Michael Joseph Seton Allen and Mary Schonwald Allen of Vineland, NJ. It was there she developed a passion for volunteerism and a fervent belief in doing a job well, regardless of pay. Both became deeply ingrained in the fiber of her being early on, shaping and defining her to her later years.

As a teen, Phyllis became active in a service organization at school, the first, but not the last of volunteer impact she would have on the lives of others and communities. During WWII, she took on her first for-pay job at a bank and began commuting into New York City to help fill voids created by so many men serving in the military overseas. As a result, Phyllis learned the merits of “plain ol’ hard work,” dedication to tasks at hand, and a no-nonsense approach to simply rolling up one’s sleeves and getting things done.

She moved through a succession of advancements in professional work from the bank to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to Columbia University. In 1966, as a young wife and mother, a family relocation led to her spending more than half of her life in the Tar Heel State, first in Mooresville and then Salisbury

since 1977. With her children in school, Phyllis was determined to complete collegiate studies begun while at Columbia University. She enrolled at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, graduating in 1973 with a B.A. in History. She also was an active volunteer with the Red Cross and Catawba Valley Girl Scout Council.

She worked as a travel agent for AAA Carolinas, Charlotte, and Travel Time, Salisbury, before joining Belk Store Services where she retired in 1994 from the support systems division of the distribution center. Not one to sit idle, Phyllis embarked on what she'd describe as her most meaningful, impactful and fulfilling work - a 20-year career - but this one as a volunteer with the Rowan County Literacy Council. Beginning as a volunteer tutor in 1994, her dedication, passion and compassion became apparent to all. The following year, she was named president and eventually executive director. She retired a second time in 2014 two months shy of 90, marking 20 years of volunteer service dedicated to improving adult literacy in Rowan County.

She was preceded in death by her parents and is survived by her daughter, Mary Waller (Mike), Weddington; son, Jim Martin, Winston-Salem; five grandchildren, Dustin Martin and Jordan Martin, Charlotte; Lincoln Waller (Jennifer), Seattle, WA, Juliet Waller of West Palm Beach, FL, and Sarah Waller of Weddington; and one great-grandchild, Madison Waller, Seattle.

The family will greet guests from 12 – 12:50 PM Thursday (May 31) at Summersett Funeral Home. A graveside service to celebrate her life will follow the visitation at 1 :00 PM , Rowan Memorial Park, 4125 Highway 601 North, Salisbury, NC with the Rev. Bruce Powell officiating.

Phyllis once remarked if granted a wish, "it would be that one day we'd (the literacy council) be out of business because everyone in Rowan County could read." In support of making Phyllis' wish a bit closer to reality, the family asks

donations be made to the Rowan County Literacy Council, 201 W. Fisher St.
Salisbury, NC 28145.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **31**. 12:00 PM - 12:50 PM (ET)

Summersett Funeral Home
1315 W. Innes St.
Salisbury, NC 28144
(704) 633-2111
<https://www.summersettfuneralhome.com>

Graveside Service

MAY **31**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Rowan Memorial Park Mausoleum
4125 Fanklin Community Center Road
Salisbury, NC 28144

Tribute Wall

JL

“ Although we didn't know Ms. Martin personally we enjoyed hearing about her from her wonderful daughter Mary... our thoughts and prayers are with you Mary and your entire family during this difficult time. We love you! Brent and Jane Lutz

Jane Lutz - June 07, 2018 at 08:02 AM

GS

“ I have great admiration for Phyllis. She worked closely with my mother, Catherine Safrit, in the Rowan Council Literary Council. Her leadership of the organization was exemplary. I am thankful for her!
--Glenna Sears

Glenna Sears - May 28, 2018 at 11:32 AM

AM

“ Your mother made an incredible impact in the lives of those she served. What a wonderful legacy. The Lord has told her, “well done, good and faithful servant.” Praying peace and sweet memories for you all. Anita

Anita Monroe - May 28, 2018 at 09:56 AM