



Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie PhD

September 17, 1931 - November 19, 2015

Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie, PhD passed away at the age of 84 on November 19, 2015 after a brief illness. A loving wife, mother, and grandmother and community advocate for public education, she will be greatly missed.

Shirley was born on Sept. 17, 1931 in Salisbury to the late Clifford Alexander Peeler and Lillian Caldwell Peeler. She graduated Boyden High School in 1949, attended Greensboro College for one year before transferring to Catawba College and graduating in 1952 with a double major in religion and philosophy and sociology.

After working as a social worker, then in the elementary Salisbury City Schools as a counselor, teacher, and innovator in open education, she then became an instructor and program director for Early Childhood Gifted Project at UNC Charlotte. All the while she was continuing her education and earned a Masters in Guidance and Counseling and a Doctorate in Childhood Development and Family Relations from UNC Greensboro. She joined the faculty of Catawba College in 1981 where she served as a professor of education until her retirement in 1993. She served on the Catawba College Board of Trustees from 2000 and until 2014 and served as Secretary.

Shirley married her “high school sweetheart” and husband of 64 years, Raymond Cecil Ritchie, on March 25, 1951 at St. John’s Lutheran Church of

Salisbury. A lifetime member of St. John's, she showed her love for God by being a beacon of light and inspiration to her family and community. Always ahead of her time, Shirley was a pioneer in innovative solutions for healthy childhood development and family care and a lifelong advocate for human rights and education in Salisbury and the Piedmont NC region.

She was highly active with Smart Start, Rowan Partnership for Children, and spearheaded establishing both the Partners in Learning Child Development and Family Resource Center and the St. John's Child Development Center. She also offered her leadership to Meals on Wheels, Rowan Regional Medical Center, the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Family Resource Center, and the Charlotte Area Education Consortium.

Shirley received many awards over her lifetime of service. Catawba College honored her with the Swink Prize, the Algernon Sidney Sullivan Award, the O.B. Michael Award, the Distinguished Alumnus Award, an honorary doctorate, the Adrian L. Shuford, Jr. Award, and establishment of the Shirley Peeler Ritchie Academy for Teaching. In sharing the Shuford Award with Raymond, she stated "I don't feel like we should be rewarded for [doing] something that we love so much, and we do love Catawba."

St. John's Lutheran honored her for her leadership in establishing the St. John's Child Development Center. The Rowan Partnership for Children honored her as the first recipient of the Champion for Young Children Award which is now named for her.

Shirley was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Nancy Peeler Keppel, Rebecca Peeler Parsons, and brother, Larry Dixon Peeler.

Shirley is survived by her beloved husband Raymond C. Ritchie, son Cliff and wife Amy, son Mark and wife Jane, and daughter Celia Ritchie Jarrett and

husband Steve all of Salisbury plus grandchildren Joy, Carl, Ben, Laura, Kate, and Carrie and many nieces and nephews.

Visitation: The family will receive friends from 5:00 – 7:00 Sunday (Nov. 22) at St. John's Lutheran Church, in Peeler Hall, 200 W. Innes St., Salisbury.

Service: A funeral service will be held at 2:00 on Monday (Nov. 23) at St. John's Lutheran Church, 200 W. Innes St., Salisbury conducted by Rev. Rhodes Woolly. Burial will follow in Chestnut Hill Cemetery.

Memorials: Gifts in lieu of flowers can be made to St. John's Child Development Center, 200 W. Innes St., Salisbury, NC 28144, to Partners in Learning Child Development Center, 2386 Robin Road, Salisbury, NC 28144, and Catawba College, 2300 W. Innes St., Salisbury, NC 28144

Arrangements are being handled by Summersett Funeral Home. Online condolences may be made at www.summersettfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Chestnut Hill Cemetery

Salisbury, NC

Tribute Wall

EC

“ *My sincere condolences and sorrow to all of you. I am so sorry I didn't know of Shirley's passing. I will miss her. Love, Ellen Caldwell*

Ellen Caldwell - December 01, 2015 at 05:07 PM

CS

“ *My love and prayers to her family. Shirley was a sweet and generous lady.*

Cheryl Sjoblom



Cheryl Sjoblom - November 24, 2015 at 03:03 PM

ML

“ *Mr And Mrs. Dennis Clarke Lamb lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie PhD*



Mr and Mrs. Dennis Clarke Lamb - November 23, 2015 at 09:32 AM

ML

Shirley Ritchie was a wonderful person and a great neighbor to my father, Julian K. Lamb, Sr., in his later years. Our sincere condolences to the family on her passing, she will be missed.

Mr and Mrs. Dennis Clarke Lamb - November 23, 2015 at 09:36 AM

RR

So sorry to hear the loss of your dear loved one. One day soon he will wipe out every tear from your eyes and death will be no more neither will mourning nor out cry nor pain be anymore. This is a beautiful hope.

renay rauch - November 24, 2015 at 06:20 AM

BL

“ *Bob Lowdermilk lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie PhD*



Bob Lowdermilk - November 22, 2015 at 03:41 PM

LW

“ *Celia, sending prayers for you and your family. I know you will miss her greatly,sounds like an amazing person.feel peace in knowing she is the Fathers hands and will be there waiting for you. Love to all your family . Linda and Jim Workman*

Linda Workman - November 22, 2015 at 12:14 PM

VD

“ *Shirley had a heart of gold, always a smile. I will miss her. With much love and prayers for all of her family. Love, Vernon Davis*

Vernon Davis - November 21, 2015 at 07:45 PM

PR

“ *So sorry to hear of Shirley's passing. She was a good friend and colleague who brightened my days, and strengthened the Teacher Education Department. Pat Reck*



Pat Reck - November 21, 2015 at 03:56 PM

W(

“ *With love, Karen, Terry, Laura and Buddy (Beattie) purchased the Garden of Memories for the family of Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie PhD.*



With love, Karen, Terry, Laura and Buddy (Beattie) -
November 21, 2015 at 03:32 PM



“ *A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of Mrs. Shirley Peeler Ritchie PhD.*



November 21, 2015 at 08:22 AM