



Dorothy Brooks Spiotta

September 6, 1925 - March 26, 2020

Dorothy Jane Brooks Spiotta, 94, died Thursday, March 26, 2020, at home.

Dorothy, “Dotta,” loving wife, mother, and grandmother, was a lifetime Memphian, grew up in the Cooper-Young neighborhood, attended Fairview Junior High, was graduated from Central High School, and attended Memphis State University. During World War II, she worked with wounded soldiers at Kennedy Hospital. Late in life, she herself went on to bravely and cheerfully battle nearly thirty years of chronic illness. She and Gene even survived a private airplane crash in 1971. Family called her the “Energizer Bunny.”

Dorothy’s greatest joy and pleasure was her husband, her family, and her relationship with God. Dotta met the love of her life, Eugene “Gene” Joseph Spiotta (Sr.) in the mid Forties while working downtown at a men’s store. Recognized as a stunning, blue-eyed beauty, Dotta had hosts of suitors. On her first date with Gene, she accidentally left her books on the streetcar. He immediately brought them back to her and found her leaving with another date; but Gene Spiotta, an ambitious and persuasive aspiring med student who loved to dance eventually won her heart, hands down. With their very different families-- hers Waspy and Baptist, his Italian and Catholic-- Dorothy said she wished she had a nickel for everyone who said that they’d never make it. All told, they celebrated just shy of 74 years of marriage, ending every happy day together holding hands in bed, saying, “I love you.” Even the night before she died.

The couple enjoyed a large group of cherished friends, first from Gene’s med school days at UT, then many friends surrounding their love of golf and later tennis, for which they were fanatic. Besides Racquet Club and Colonial Country Club, the couple spent countless weekends at home swimming and playing mixed doubles with their large family that continued to grow through the decades. They also spent many happy family holidays on Greers Ferry Lake, at Tannenbaum, which they developed with friends Pat and Vernon Kerns, as well as at their beach condo in Destin. She loved the water, fireworks, and hours of jesting and humor. She loved spending time reading or sitting with our children and grandchildren, helping each person feel special and affirmed. Her focus was always

relationships. Her drawers were never organized. And as sweet as she was, Dotta also had a slyly caustic wit. But never coarse. Ever the perfect Southern lady, she wrote reams of thank you notes that people from the past often remark upon with fondness.

A lifelong student of the Bible herself, Dorothy led hundreds of other women with small-group Bible study with Bible Study Fellowship, Precept Upon Precept, then Community Bible Study, where she was influenced by Katharine A. Phillips, a beloved teacher. Dorothy came from generations of Baptists, many of them preachers and dissenters, some descended from Bedfordshire, England, where John Bunyan, jailed for his faith, preached and wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Like him, it was her express desire in life and in death that every member of her large family "shall come to know and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior." Mornings for her began with prayer for every child and grandchild by name. Then Cream of Wheat.

The family also wishes to thank her devoted caregivers Phanetra Lee, Tijuana Dixon, and Rosa Broome. In another category of sainthood is Idell Reed, who in more than four decades of love and care has become a cherished friend and sister to our whole family.

Dorothy was a member of The Memphis Woman's Exchange, Duration Club, Memphis Medical Society Alliance, and PEO. She was a lifelong member of Union Avenue Baptist Church until the family's center migrated farther "out East," and she joined Kirby Woods Baptist Church.

Interestingly, Dorothy herself is one of the very last living grandchildren of Arizina Nolley and Samuel Wilkins Reid, early Virginia settlers of Shelby County whose numerous progeny populated our Mid-South region. Like her forebears, Dorothy became the proud matriarch of a very large lineage-- six children, eighteen grandchildren, and twenty-eight great-grandchildren.

She is predeceased by her parents Mayme Theresa Reid and James Robert Brooks, her brother James Robert Brooks, Jr., and granddaughter Sarah Jane Spiotta Peppel. She is survived by her devoted husband of nearly 74 years, Dr. Eugene J. Spiotta (Sr.), her children and spouses, Eugene Joseph Spiotta, Jr. (Gail), Larry Brooks Spiotta (Hollye), Michael Guy Spiotta (Ann), Laura Ann Spiotta Myrland (Robert D.), Judy Lynn Spiotta Baker (James A., Jr.), all of Memphis, and Robert Stanley Spiotta (Yvonne), of Atlanta. She is also survived by her loving grandchildren, Eugene Spiotta III, Timothy Spiotta, Whitney Spiotta Heffernan, Daniel Spiotta, Erin Spiotta Egan, Kimen Spiotta Brinkley, Lauren Spiotta Cannon, Michael Spiotta, Jr., Dorothy Spiotta, Lynn Green, Kristin Green Dixon, Robert Myrland, Jr., J. Austin Baker III, Rebecca Baker Crucifixio, Lawson Baker,

Marguerite Spiotta, and Marianna Spiotta. And twenty-eight great-grandchildren. You know who you are!

The family requests memorials in her honor may be made to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, ARMS Autism Resource of the Mid-South, or the charity of your choice.

Because of current COVID precautions, a celebration of life will be held at a future date. A private service was held Sunday, March 29, 2020, with internment at Memorial Park, Memphis

Comments



“ An external video has been added.



Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery - April 04, 2020 at 10:59 AM



“ Dotta and my mother, Kay or Katie, became friends when we moved to Memphis when I was 3 and we went to Union Ave Baptist. They always had so much fun together laughing through everything they did. Later in life they would talk on the phone for hours. When my mom died, Dotta told me how much she missed her. She was always a gracious and generous friend. I know Dotta, Pat Kerns and my mom are laughing in heaven now. Much love from the Winfield Siblings (Don, Donna K, Bob and Nita)

Donna Skaarer - March 30, 2020 at 09:34 PM



“ So sorry for your loss. I have so many wonderful memories of your mother and family as a young person
Prayers for the entire family

Julie Willcox Bull - April 02, 2020 at 07:00 PM



“ Wonderful member of JOY and GRACE Classes at Kirby Woods Baptist Church. She kept recovering from serious illnesses to attend church. What a wonderful family with a great outreach in Memphis and beyond. Betty Jo Halbach

Betty Jo Halbach - March 30, 2020 at 03:53 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dorothy Brooks Spiotta.



March 28, 2020 at 12:19 PM