

*Gwinnett County
Retired Educators
Association*

In Memoriam

2021 - 2022



A Special Memorial Edition of the GCREA Newsline

Remembering

Jack Dempsey Britt



September 14, 1926- May 28, 2021

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Jack Dempsey Britt of Snellville, GA. Jack joined the Navy at age 15 and served on the Destroyer Escort during World War II. He later became a charter member of the GA National Guard Unit in Gwinnett County retiring with over 25 years of service.

Jack came back from the war and graduated from Grayson High School and went on to the University of Georgia graduating with a Bachelor Degree in Education. He received his Master's Degree from Georgia State in Trade and Industry at age 50. Jack began his teaching and coaching career at Tucker High School and in 1952 he taught at Lawrenceville High School where he started the first football team in the Gwinnett County School System. He has also taught girls' and boys' basketball, track, tennis, and cheerleaders. Jack truly played no favorites! His teaching and coaching careers have taken him to South Gwinnett, Bethesda, and Parkview Vocational School. Jack was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association as well as a member of Georgia Retired Educators Association.

Over the years Jack has been active in community projects in Lawrenceville, Snellville, and Grayson. He has raised funds for the visitor's bleachers at Grayson High School as well as building many trophy cases and lockers, plus supervising the building of the concession stand. For his efforts, the Grayson High School football field was named in his honor in 2007. In 2017, Jack was inducted into the Gwinnett County Sports Hall of Fame.

Besides teaching and coaching, Jack was a homebuilder, commercial developer and owned and operated the 'All-Star Drive-In' with his brother. He was an active member of Lawrenceville First Baptist Church, enjoyed many outdoor sports, and held season tickets to his beloved Georgia Bulldogs since 1950.

We celebrate one of our Emeritus members, Jack Dempsey Britt, who loved teaching and coaching young people and continued to have an interest in each of them after graduation. We will miss this gentle giant of a man.



Remembering

Nita Elise Perigo Chambless

January 12, 1940- November 15, 2021

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Nita Elise Perigo Chambless of Cumming, GA. Nita graduated from Logansport High School Louisiana, Class of 1957, and was an alumna of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute with a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Nita moved to Georgia and received her Master of Education from Brenau University and a Reading Recovery Certificate from Georgia State University. For Nita, joy came from teaching children to read in kindergarten and first grade at Lilburn Elementary School. Nita was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association as well as a member of Georgia Retired Educators Association.

Nita was a woman of deep Christian faith. Her joy in her Lord Jesus and contagious smile were always on display in such beautiful ways. She always selflessly looked to the needs of others. She was a member of Cumming United Methodist Church and frequently taught in her Sunday School Class.

Nita was a member of Kappa Delta sorority. She served on the executive board in the local chapter and as program chair on the state level. She was also a member of the Alpha Delta Kappa International Honorary Organization for Women Educators.

We celebrate Nita Chambless who made the most of her life to spread joy to her students, her family, her friends, and her church. Her constant companions, a Yorkie named Molly and an Australian Shepherd named Penny, who were certified as Humane Hearts Pet Therapy dogs went with her to many schools and libraries with "Paws" to Read. Nita spent all of her life spreading love and joy to others.

Remembering

Dianne Crossman

1948- July 3, 2021



We are celebrating the life and legacy of Dianne Crossman of Dacula, GA. Dianne was born in NY, but moved to Pompano Beach, FL, as a pre-teen and graduated from Pompano Beach High School in 1966. She graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a BA in Education in 1971.

Dianne started teaching 3rd grade in Port St. Joe, FL where her husband Hugh was serving in the Coast Guard. She taught for a few more years in Broward County, FL before they moved to Lawrenceville, GA in 1979. Dianne completed her Master of Education and Specialist in Education degrees from Georgia State University. She taught students at Trickum, Five Forks, and J. E. Richards Middle Schools for 25 years before retiring after a 33-year career in 2004. Dianne was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association as well as a member of Georgia Retired Educators Association.

Dianne had a terrific love of people, nature, animals, and the environment and pursued all these interests with a vibrant spirit of volunteerism. She volunteered countless hours with the Red Cross, Rivers Alive Georgia, Nothing but the Truth Ministries, Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministries and Northside Hospital. She was a member of Dacula United Methodist Church.

We are celebrating Dianne Crossman who was always meant to be a teacher. She put so much of herself into her teaching and led many extra-curricular activities. Dianne loved her students and they loved her back.



Remembering

Sarah A. Finger

September 8, 1946 - December 5, 2021

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Sarah A. Finger of Lawrenceville, GA. She was born in Columbia, SC, but grew up in Carrollton, GA. She attained a Bachelor and Master in Education from the University of West Georgia.

Sarah taught students history and theater at Bremen High School, Dacula High School and then North Gwinnett High School. She was a speech and debate coach. Sarah coached and directed many students who won trophies, medals, and scholarships. She was inducted into the Georgia Forensics Coaches Hall of Fame. Sarah was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association as well as a member of Georgia Retired Teachers Association.

Sarah was active in the Catholic church as a Lector and Extraordinary Minister who trained other church leaders. She was an avid reader, loved to travel and see shows. But, her favorite role was grandmother.

We are celebrating the life of Sarah A. Finger whose most important accomplishment was being the supportive, loving, and generous teacher students needed.



Remembering

Reba Hightower

May 5, 1936 - July 7, 2020

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Reba Hightower of Locust Grove, GA. Reba was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association. She was an avid animal lover.



Remembering

Mary Frazier Long

May 4, 1932 - July 19, 2021

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Mary Frazier Long of Lawrenceville, GA where she grew up "going barefoot everywhere". She spent her days in her father's store and her first job was at the town cinema.

After graduating from Lawrenceville High School, Mary earned degrees from the University of Georgia and West Georgia College. She taught public school for 34 years. Mary was a lifelong advocate for public education. She was a former president of Georgia Retired Educators Association, a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, and was appointed to a statewide task force in education by then Governor Jimmy Carter.

Mary authored many books, including About Lawrenceville and Old Georgia Privies, and she wrote "The Road Runner", a column for the Gwinnett Citizen newspaper. She established a scholarship program from the proceeds of her books and speeches. Mary was known as the Lawrenceville historian and provided commentary for the Lawrenceville Trolley Tours. She was a lifelong, active member of Lawrenceville First Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School for many years.

We celebrate the life of Mary Frazier Long whose dedication to education and learning lives on through her former and future students and colleagues.

**Remembering
Barbara Ann May**



August 14, 1938 - November 28, 2021

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Barbara Ann May of Lawrenceville, GA. Barbara was born in Chattanooga, TN. She graduated from Brenau University with a Master degree in Education. Barbara taught students at Hi-Hope, Lawrenceville Elementary, Centerville Elementary and retired from Pharr Elementary after teaching for over 30 years.

Barbara was a member of Lawrenceville First United Methodist Church where she enjoyed the friendships of her church family, especially the Joy Sunday School Class. She was active there teaching classes. Barbara was devoted to her family, especially her grandchildren during her lifetime.

We celebrate the life of Barbara Ann May who will be remembered for her devotion to the students of Gwinnett County and her support of her husband, Hugh, as they impacted the education of all students. She believed there is no greater commitment than to the education of children.



Remembering

Charles Ray "C.R." Milam

November 17, 1936 - March 8, 2022

We are celebrating the life and legacy of Charles Ray Milam of Duluth, GA. Charles enrolled as a cadet at North Georgia College in 1954. He spent most of his career as the warehouse manager for Parsons, Inc. Charles spent most of his life in Duluth and was a treasure of Duluth history. He was an active member of Duluth First Baptist Church where he served as deacon for almost 50 years.

We are celebrating Charles Milam who was a life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association as he supported his beloved wife, Juanita, in her education career.

Remembering

Wanda Lee Thomas

March 30, 1945 - August 13, 2021



We are celebrating the life and legacy of Wanda Lee Thomas of Commerce, GA. Wanda worked in the Transportation Department of Gwinnett County for over 30 years starting in 1979. She was a Life member of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association. Wanda was a loyal member of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church of Lawrenceville.