

Kathleen Anderson Lees

HENDERSONVILLE - Kathleen Anderson Lees, of Hendersonville, NC, age 97, died of natural causes on October 12, 2022.

She was preceded in death by her husband, of 67 years, Lewis W. Lees; son, Judd H. Lees; great-grandson, Graham; and her sister-in-law, Pat Anderson.

Kathleen was born in Rochester, MN, to parents Dr. George ("Judd") Anderson and Myra Leota Scott Anderson in 1925, where her love of science and learning took her to Pembroke College (now part of Brown University) and work stints at the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. A promising career in microbiology was put on hold when she went on a blind date, fell in love with, and married the dashing Navy Lieutenant Lees accompanying him to various ports of call including San Diego. At the conclusion of Lewis' naval service in World War II and Korea, the Lees settled in Peoria, IL. In addition to raising five children, Kathleen was an active volunteer in the Peoria community. A five-year relocation of the family to Sao Paulo, Brazil, fostered a love of Brazilian food and music which continued throughout her life, as well as empathy for those less fortunate in the community. While in Sao Paulo, Kathleen volunteered at a hospital for infants of indigent families as well as a hospital for crippled children. After returning to Peoria, Kathleen increased her community volunteer work; including stints with the St. Andrew's Church Vestry, St. Paul's Church Vestry and Women's Auxiliary, the Girl Scouts, the Neighborhood House Auxiliary, the Woodruff High School PTA, the Peoria YWCA, the Peoria Human Relations Commission, United Way, Lakeview Museum and the Peoria Women's Civic Federation. A particular love was her involvement in the American Field Service for Central Illinois, allowing her to "adopt" high school students from around the world and remain a friend, pen pal and mentor to them for decades. Through AFS Kathleen and Lewis hosted Takamasa Mori from Micronesia for his senior year of high school in Peoria and decades later Takamasa's son, Jhermick, for his 8th grade year at Flat Rock Middle School in Hendersonville, NC. Her extraordinary commitment to the betterment of the Peoria community led to her recognition in 1975 with the Tom Connor Service Award as the outstanding volunteer in the Peoria area.

When Lewis retired from Caterpillar Tractor, he and Kathleen moved from Peoria, IL to the beautiful community of Hendersonville, NC, in the



shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains after a family reunion at Kanuga Conference Center convinced her.this was "home." Her community involvement continued as she worked tirelessly on behalf of those less fortunate including the underserved Latino community via the United Way and St. James Episcopal Church, as well as 19 years with Guardian Ad Litem. She was an active participant and Board member at Kanuga Conference Center and was one of the initial organizers of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast in Hendersonville. Once again her quiet service did not go unnoticed and she was named "Citizen of the Year" by the North Carolina Chapter of Social Workers and "North Carolina Civitan Citizen of the Year" in 2000. The Community Foundation of Henderson County awarded Kathleen the 2021 Dorothy Dellinger "Dot" Marlow Philanthropic Catalyst Award. Kathleen was also honored that year with The Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation.

Kathleen was a voracious reader, an avid traveler, a music lover, a wonderful mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother and a true friend to those who needed one, especially teenagers (her own and others) for whom she provided a vote of confidence and a kick in the pants to help them reach their potential. A summer highlight of the last decades of her and Lewis' life was the annual weeklong gathering of kids, spouses and grandkids migrating from all over the United States to gather at a single, rambunctious rental house on Isle of Palms, SC, to reconnect and relax in the warm Carolina sun. In a lovely tribute to Kathleen, her husband, Lewis, once summarized Kathleen's three lifelong pillars as "love of family, church and helping others."

She is survived by her brother, Jim Anderson; children, Nelson (Anna Varughese), Carlton, Raymond (Jan) and Kristin (David) Huntley; grandchildren, Andrew (Marinee), Judd (Beth), Aubrey (Heath) Patrick, Grant (Jessica), Shelby (Nick) Pope, Will, Preston (Carley) and Maddie (Aaron Brown); and great-grandchildren, Chapman, Matilda, Paige, Hudson, Mac, Ella Judd, Caden and Anderson (Andie Rae).

A service will be held to commemorate and celebrate a life well-lived on Monday, November 7th, 10 AM at St. James Episcopal Church, Hendersonville, NC. Please wear a bit of blue, any shade of blue. Blue was her favorite color.

Donations in lieu of remembrances to both honor Kathleen and carry on her legacy can be made to Kanuga Conferences and St. James Episcopal Church, Hendersonville, NC.

As written by her son, Judd, in 2016, with periodic updates by Kathleen and Kristin, Judd's twin sister.