



Marie (Hall) Whitehead

August 29, 1928 - November 26, 2016

The former owner of the Cherokeean Herald newspaper and radio stations KTLU-AM and KWRW-FM and the widow of state Rep. Emmett H. Whitehead, Marie Hall Whitehead, 88, died Nov. 26 in Rusk.

The funeral will be held 1:30 p.m. Thursday, at First United Methodist Church in Rusk; visitation will be held from 6-8 p.m. Wednesday at Wallace-Thompson Funeral Home in Rusk.

Mrs. Whitehead and her late husband utilized the print and broadcast media platform they built to support causes benefitting Rusk and Cherokee County for 66 years. They successfully defended Rusk State Hospital when Austin auditors suggested closure in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s – saving almost 1,000 jobs.

They owned the Rusk Cherokeean, the Alto Herald, radio stations KTLU-AM radio and KWRW-FM, and E-Z Vision Cable Company. In 2001 she received a state historical marker designating the newspaper as the oldest weekly newspaper in Texas.

Mrs. Whitehead received her bachelor's and master's degree from Stephen F. Austin in 1971 and 1975 respectively.

In 1962, she was elected to the Rusk ISD school board. Later she was appointed to the Region 7 Education Service Center Board of Directors and was a charter board member of the Texas State Railroad Authority in 2005.

Mrs. Whitehead was a charter member of Gateway Community Partners, formerly known as the Sheltered Workshop, in Cherokee County.

She was an active member of First United Methodist Church in Rusk. Awards include the Rusk Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year; Businesswoman of the Year in 2010; and the Best of East Texas award in 2011; Texas Press Association Golden 50 in 2000.

In 2013, she and her daughter Terrie Gonzalez donated one of the few remaining hot type printing presses from the Alto Herald to a printing museum at the Waco Herald Tribune in Waco.

Lily Marie Hall Whitehead was born Aug. 29, 1928, the oldest of four children born to Mae Ellisor Hall Anderson and Wilburn Gibbs Hall of New Waverly.

The service will be officiated by the Rev. John Hawkins (Robinhawk) and the Rev. Bart Reddoch.

Active pallbearers are Charles Hassell, Lester Hughes, Mike Murray, Bob Goldsberry, Johnny Patterson, Quinten Boyd, Walter Session, all of Rusk; and Ferris Fain, Nacogdoches.

Honorary pallbearers are Sam Florian, John Birkelbach, both of Rusk; Elton McCune, Jim Cromwell, both of Jacksonville; Donnis Baggett, Bryan; Dan Kellum, Longview; and Sandy Allen, Baytown.

She is preceded in death by her husband of 54 years Emmett Holman

Whitehead, her mother, father and brother Gene.

She is survived by two daughters: Terrie and son-in-law Robert Gonzalez; and Dr. Wendee Whitehead and her life partner, Anne Matrone, all of Austin; one grandson, Chris Gonzalez and partner Penny Smyser, two granddaughters, Sandra Gonzalez and husband Nelson Sanz, all of Austin; and Lauren E. Gonzalez, Corpus Christi.

She is also survived by two sisters: Bonnye Ivy of Round Rock and Shirley Roberts of Dallas; four nephews and numerous cousins and extended family members.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to Heritage Center of Cherokee County, P.O. Box 974, Rusk, 75785; or the Rusk Public Library, 207 E. 6th St., Rusk, 75785.

Tribute Wall



“ Marie (Hall) Whitehead

October 04, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ Marie Whitehead played a huge role in my early life as a high school student in the late 70s and early 80s. She continued to be a life coach, encourager and friend to me over the last 35+ years. I still use some of the job skills she taught me when I worked for her at the Cherokeean. She will me greatly missed. Her friend, Linney Patton, Palestine Texas

Linney Patton - December 01, 2016 at 08:40 PM



“ From your Alan Plummer Assoc family purchased the Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant for the family of Marie (Hall) Whitehead.



From your Alan Plummer Assoc family - November 29, 2016 at 05:30 PM

BH

“ *Marie Whitehead..Not enough adjectives to describe her but known by her friends and colleagues to be.a gracious, generous,gentle compassionate, hard-charging journalist with ink in her veins, eager to tutor and challenge her younger proteges to embrace professional, objective news writing. Oh, yes, honesty, sincerity, and integrity.*

When Marie came to SF Austin University to toward bachelor's and master's degrees she was more than a student, she was a mentor to faculty and students alike...eager to share her knowledge and her experience as a professional journalist.

I am fully expecting Marie to meet me at the Eastern Gate.

...The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...Deut. 33:27

Ben Hobbs / SFA Univ., retired

Ben F Hobbs - November 28, 2016 at 06:38 PM

SA

“ My friend, colleague, and mentor of 44 years, Marie is a part of me. To work for the Whiteheads was to join a close-knit family. Still, after all these years, we who were part of Whitehead Enterprises are held together by the love and dedication of this wonderful lady. Before and beyond that, Marie and I worked together on university projects and shared the history of Cherokee County and the Rusk community, which were her heart and soul. She loved the people of her community.



I know of her faith. Those who are in Christ, who pass from this life, are not lost, but are just on the other side of a curtain through which we too will pass. When my time comes, Marie and I will finish the conversations we began.

From "Gone from My Sight" by Henry Van Dyke:

"And, just at the moment when someone says, 'There, she is gone,' there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, 'Here she comes!'

And that is dying."

In the meantime, we will miss her sweet company and treasure her legacy.

Sandy Allen

Sandy Allen - November 28, 2016 at 03:08 PM

JG

“ I enjoyed the years I worked at the Cherokeean Herald for Marie and Emmett. Mrs. Whitehead was always a lady and really a fun person to work with getting the paper together late on a Tuesday evening. She will be missed. Janet Gates

Janet Gates - November 28, 2016 at 01:40 PM