

Maurene Austin, Andrews County Librarian from 1951 to 1982, passed away at home Wednesday, July 31, 2019, at the age of 93. Born in Melbourne, Arkansas, October 4, 1925, she grew up during the hard times of the great depression and World War II. She met her husband to be, Russell D. Austin, while a student at Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos, Texas while working in Williams Drug Store soda fountain. Russell was an Army Air Corps navigation student at the training base outside the city. He came to the soda fountain each time he was in town and they flirted every time he was there. Just before he was to leave for deployment to England, they had one date and got engaged! She got the news his B-17 bomber had been shot down over Germany on his 5th mission and was missing in action, often a prelude to news of death. Fortunately he had been able to bail out and elude capture for three days, but was captured and sent to a POW camp. She and he corresponded on the small, very thin paper forms allowed and were able to keep in touch for over a year before his camp was liberated and he got shipped back to America. Shortly after his return, they were married July 12, 1945 in San Marcos on the "hottest day in the world", with the church candles melting and the flowers all wilting, but the marriage was a loving and lasting one. They lived with Russell's parents briefly until Russell heard of the oil boom in west Texas and hitchhiked out to check it out. The boom meant there was a great need for teachers. He was hired in Andrews and went back for Maurene and brought her back. The desolate dusty, mainly treeless little boomtown was quite a shock and yet they made it their home for the rest of their lives and played significant parts in its growth and maturity. She and Russell were both teachers. She also worked at a local dry goods store. Her son, Bill, was born in April, 1947. She and Russell decided he would further his education so he could become an administrator. They moved to Dallas and he signed up to enroll in SMU. While they were waiting for the semester to begin, they passed time reading Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason stories to each other and he made the comment, "You know, I have always thought I would like to be a lawyer." She replied, "Why not?" So they packed up, moved to Austin and he enrolled in The University of Texas Law School. She worked various jobs until her daughter Sherry Kay was born in May 1950. When he graduated, they moved back to Andrews. She helped with his office, working on client tax returns and other matters. After first working as a teacher, due to her experience working in her college library, Maurene was hired as the librarian for the Andrews County Library, which had been established as a result of the local ladies' Andrews Study Club. She dearly loved the job, especially working with the public. Her favorite part was the Saturday morning story hour when she would read and act out children's books, with different voices for the characters and actions described in the stories. She also helped many a library patron with research and general recommendations. In June, 1957, her second daughter, Sylvia, was born. All her children attended Andrews schools through high school graduation. Maurene played a significant role in the design of the library remodel in 1965-67 when the north wing was converted to house a museum and the south wing was expanded and renovated into a new facility. In addition to her job at the library, she was active in the community as a 4H leader, Sunday school teacher at Means Memorial Methodist Church and Study Club member and officer. She loved to crochet, including making yards of lace for Sylvia's wedding gown. She was a prize-winning, accomplished seamstress. She made many clothes for her family through the years from the time of her youth until her later years. She was an accomplished cook, having started at an early age, especially pies and candy. Her pecan millionaires were a staple at family Christmases. In 1978, after the birth of the first grandchild in Houston, she and Russell decided they needed a meeting place somewhere between Houston and Andrews. They found a small place at Spicewood on Lake Travis. A couple years later, they bought a larger lot with a lake view and made a marvelous vacation place that all the family used for years. She and Russell both retired in 1982 and they did a lot of traveling and sight-seeing all over the USA in whatever convertible he had at the time. Russell passed away in 1998 and she remained in Andrews in the house they built in 1959 until her death.



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October 4, 1925 - July 31, 2019

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IN LOVING MEMORY

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God Saw You

*God saw that you were getting tired
And a cure was not to be,
So, He put His arms around you
And whispered, "Come to Me."
With tearful eyes, we watched you,
And saw you pass away.
Although we loved you dearly,
We could not make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating,
small frail hands at rest.
God broke our hearts to prove to us,
He only takes the best.*

Maurene Austin

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH

*Sunday, October 4, 1925
Melbourne, Arkansas
Age: 93*

DATE AND PLACE OF DEATH

*Wednesday, July 31, 2019
Andrews, Texas*

SERVICE TIME AND LOCATION

*2:00PM Saturday, August 3, 2019
Means Memorial United Methodist Church
Andrews, Texas*

OFFICIATING

*Pastor Les Hall
Means Memorial United Methodist Church
Andrews, Texas*

INTERMENT LOCATION

*Andrews West Cemetery
SW 14th and SW Ave D
Andrews, Texas*

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