



Ellie Witherspoon Caffery

MAY 7, 1924 - NOV 23, 2011



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Ellie Witherspoon Caffery died peacefully at Christwood Retirement Community on Wednesday, November 23, 2011. She was born in Indianapolis, IN on May 7, 1924 to the late John Barkley and Martha Vairin Witherspoon. She was a long time resident of New Orleans, resided in Covington since 1996, and was the beloved wife of the late J. Taylor Caffery, whom she married in 1946. She is survived by two daughters: Martha Caffery Effler (Dean) of Yakima, WA and Barbara Caffery Newhouse (Peter) of Baton Rouge; two sons: Taylor L. Caffery (Mary Ann) of Baton Rouge and Donelson Caffery (Angie Wiggins) of Powhatan, VA; one sister, Monk Brannan (Carl); four grandchildren: Erin C. Effler, Keith C. Effler (Stephanie), Adam B. Newhouse (Niki), Rebekah A. Newhouse; and one great-grandson, Bryce A. Kelly. She was preceded in death by one sister, Brucie Witherspoon Rafferty.

Ellie was a world traveler, a scholar, a sportswoman, a philanthropist, and a dedicated New Orleans uptowner. She graduated with honors from Louise S. McGehee School in 1941 (she was, in later years, proud to be a member of Mrs. Yancey's book club); and Vassar College, 1944-45, with a degree in bacteriology. Following graduation, she did sweet potato research for the Department of Agriculture. She volunteered many hours with the New Orleans Public Schools, the Junior League of New Orleans and perhaps most notably with the development of the Holman Vocational Center, which later merged with Goodwill Industries.

Ellie never ceased to read, search and learn. She developed a fascination with anthropology, and became an amateur expert in Mayan history and culture. At Tulane she also undertook a graduate degree in American Literature. Her thesis delved into mother-daughter relationships in the literary world, especially that of Zelda and Scottie Fitzgerald. Her love of the arts kept her active as a patron of the New Orleans Museum of Art and an enthusiastic supporter of the local theatre and philharmonic events. She was the Queen of Momus immediately following World



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War Two.

Her many adventures took her to every continent, including Antarctica twice. She was photographed at the helm of a Russian icebreaker, and she once speared a crocodile in the Amazon. She and Taylor scuba dived in the Red Sea, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Caribbean. She was especially fond of Guatemala, Mexico's Quintana Roo and the US Grand Canyon. She also loved bird watching, tennis, and was a competitor at badminton in tournaments the world over. When at home, she was an extraordinary hostess. She said, "It is all the experiences I've been given from other people that made my life. Even in Lacombe, it's a different place when people come to visit. It's not what you do by yourself, but what's done with other people that's important."

Her family expresses its deep gratitude to the physicians, nurses and staff of St. Tammany Hospital, Christwood Retirement Community, and Canon Hospice for their care during her final days. A gathering to celebrate Ellie's life will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, December 9, 2011 at her country home, 28690 Ruth Rd., Lacombe, LA 70445. A reception will continue until 4:00 PM.



Tribute Wall

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JH

Jim Farr And Louis Huson posted:

We enjoyed several lovely afternoons with your mother and her friends from Christwood. She was an interesting and dynamic woman who enjoyed speaking her mind on all kinds of topics. We are required to be at the office for a meeting when the reception id scheduled for the house on Ruth Road. We were able to clean up the leaves and pine needles at our end of the driveway/cul de sac. We respectfully send our condolences to you both and to your families. Jim Farr Louis Huson 60207 Aoklawn Avenue, Lacombe

December 7 at 2:45 PM

TS

Tabitha Starnes posted:

I just wanted to say sorry for your loss. I'm glad and pleased to have known mrs caffrey. She gave encouragement when it was needed and always knew how to make me smile when I walked in her room. She was a blessing to Christwood. She is dearly missed. Blessings and prayers.

December 3 at 1:04 PM

NS

Nancy Stapleton posted:

Taylor and Mary Ann, my condolences to you both. My mother too passed away in June. I am so sorry for your loss.

November 30 at 4:59 AM

BL

Barb & Tom Layton posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. May the words in Isaiah 26:19 give you hope and comfort.

November 29 at 2:48 PM

BK

Brother K posted:

Dear Caffery Family, My mother and I offer you our deepest condolences for your loss. Ellie was one of my dear friends when I visited Christwood, and I always enjoying visiting with her--her wit, her opinions, her sparkling eyes. We will miss her so much. In Christian fellowship, Brother K

November 24 at 1:16 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ellie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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