



## Florence Anna Hartzell

April 13, 1923 - January 7, 2018

HARTZELL, FLORENCE ANNA (UNDERWOOD, VOLKER, LAIDLEY), passed away Sunday, January 7, 2018, in the Creekside Living Facility, Huntsville, Texas, at the age of 94. Born in Detroit, Michigan, she was the daughter of the late Ozro E. Underwood and Laura (Graves) Underwood. Florence lived in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan; Sylvania and North Olmsted, Ohio and Dixon, Illinois prior to moving to Huntsville, Texas in early 2017.

Florence was a vibrant woman, actively engaged in contributing to her community throughout her life. Her most cherished role, though, was that of mother and grandmother. She is survived by sons, Richard A. Volker (Robin) of Blairsville, Georgia, Roland T. Volker Jr. of Huntsville, Texas and Robert W. Volker (Jodi Lilly) of San Ramon, California. She was the beloved grandmother of six and great grandmother of nine. She was preceded in death by husbands Roland Volker (1988), Samuel Laidley (1998) and Robert Hartzell (2016) as well as her siblings Ena M. Gurenson and Beverly M. Underwood.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on at 1:00 PM, Saturday April 14, 2018, at Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home, 1700 Normal Park Drive, Huntsville Texas. Family Visitation hours are between 11:00- 1:00 PM

Additional Photos and Biographical information on Florence Hartzell's Life can be found on Facebook using search query "Florence Hartzell Memorial" or at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/141083686578284/>

### Florence's Story as Told to or Remembered by Others

Florence Anna Underwood was born on Friday, April 13, 1923, to Laura (Graves) Underwood and Ozro E. Underwood. Florence spent her formative years on Garland Avenue in Detroit often making summer trips to visit her mother's family home in Nova Scotia, Canada. At that time, the Graves family was busy expanding their apple cider

business to include a new line of carbonated soft drinks. Florence fondly recalled that during those visits she was allowed access to the soda pop factory warehouse where she would “sample” the wares. Her favorite was the Chocolate Yoo Hoo soda but soon she was disappointed to discover that she could only drink so much before she made herself sick.

Later, her family moved to Audubon Avenue on the east side of Detroit where she graduated from Denby High School. As a teenage girl, Florence conquered her first of several life challenges, a speech impediment that caused her to stutter and made her painfully shy. In an attempt to instill more self confidence in their daughter, her parents enrolled her in weekly elocution lessons. On her eighteenth birthday, Florence and her sister Ena Mae performed a public recital at her home. Florence recited the poem *The Captains Daughter* by James T. Fields flawlessly, without a single stutter or stammer. (Her sons would later hear that poem many times over the years, as she would recite it to begin their summer driving vacations.) Ultimately, Florence’s speech impediment, elocution lessons and love for others led her to a career as a Speech and Language Therapist.

Florence formally met Roland Volker at age 16 when she was introduced to him by her older brother Beverly. Their first encounter, however, occurred when Roland, who was washing store front windows in Detroit whistled at her as she was walking down the street by her home. As she recalled the occasion, she turned around to give him a dirty look but he was so cute that she smiled instead. Much to Roland’s surprise Florence turned out to be the sister of his good friend Beverly. Despite her parents’ concerns about their three year age difference they began seeing each other with Roland’s and Beverly’s friendship aiding in their cover. Their budding romance was soon interrupted when Roland returned to Ohio to attend Bowling Green State University. Florence continued her education and made plans to attend the University of Michigan.

As events would later unfold the Country was plunged into World War II - Roland answered the call, joined the army and was stationed in England. Meanwhile, Florence began school at the U of M and worked summer vacations for the war effort in a canning factory.

In August 1947 Florence and Roland were married at Buelah Baptist Church in Detroit in a candlelight ceremony. The newlyweds completed their formal educations, with Florence obtaining her Master of Arts degree in Speech. She and Roland, went to live in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia where he worked in the family cannery business. Homesick, they relocated back to Detroit in 1948 where she began her teaching career.

Teaching was a delight for her, spanning 21 years in Michigan and Ohio. She began her career working with children with speech impediments, and by the time she retired was working with severely developmentally disabled adults pioneering new teaching techniques.

However, Florence's first priority was her family and she took several years off to enjoy motherhood. The whole family looked forward to summers, as they included fun tent camping trips and other summer adventures. Florence also taught Vacation Bible School during those summers, at Grosse Pointe Baptist Church, which she made sure her sons dutifully attended. Florence always took every opportunity to teach her boys important life lessons around honesty, character, hard work and good morals.

Florence retired from teaching in 1979 to spend time volunteering at her church. Several years later, when Roland retired they began traveling extensively on Elderhostel trips, as well as visiting their children and grandchildren throughout the country. Always the teacher, Florence maintained close contact with her out-of-state grandchildren by writing letters encouraging them to learn and memorize Bible verses and stories that spoke to her. Flo's "encouragement" included offering them a dollar for each new Bible verse they memorized and recited back to her. Her plan was a success and this endeavor ended up costing her a fair amount of cash. She loved hearing them recite the verses and being able to talk to them about what they meant to her.

In 1988, after almost 42 years of marriage, Roland passed away after a lengthy illness. During his illness the Hospice nurse was a frequent visitor to their home and provided a grateful Florence with much needed breaks.

To honor the memory of her late husband and to thank Hospice for their help, Florence began making and selling flower cards to benefit the Visiting Nurse Association Hospice, Cleveland (see except below). This project quickly evolved into a group of women volunteers meeting weekly at Florence's home to design, decorate and package the flower cards for sale. Over the years the card sales have generated thousands of dollars in donations to Hospice.

Florence wanted to help others also struggling with the loss of a loved one. One of them was a neighbor, Samuel Laidley, whose wife had recently become ill and passed away. They bonded over evening neighborhood dog walks and their mutual experience of spousal loss.

After a year or so of circling the neighborhood on these daily walks Sam proposed

marriage and Florence accepted. Her marriage to Sam took place in summer of 1991 in a backyard wedding at her house in North Olmsted, Ohio attended by both families. Sam brought light, happiness and romance back into Florence's life occasionally to her sons' and grandchildren's embarrassment. Sam and Florence spent more than seven very happy years together traveling and doing charity work for Hospice. Sam passed away suddenly in 1998 and Florence was again left alone.

God, however, had yet another chapter for Florence's life. Several years previous, Sam and Florence had met and become long-distance friends with Bob and Esther Hartzell during an Elderhostel trip to Ireland. They continued to stay in touch with Bob and Esther after their trip. A short time after Sam passed Florence mailed a note to Bob and Esther notifying them of Sam's passing.

Unfortunately and coincidentally the day after her mailing she received a note from Bob telling them of Esther's passing. That began a frequent communication loop between Bob and Florence, which started as US mail and phone calls but quickly evolved to Florence getting a computer and an email account.

They exchanged visits between each other's homes, Bob in Dixon Illinois and Florence in North Olmsted, Ohio. Florence eagerly accepted Bob's marriage proposal. In September 2000 they were married in a church packed with family and friends, Bob was 80 years young, and Florence, his beaming bride, of 77.

Florence soon discovered that she enjoyed small town life in Dixon. The couple spent many happy years together traveling and Flo, once again, got the local ladies involved in the flower card work for Hospice.

With advancing age, Florence became unsteady on her feet and a fall resulted in hip surgery which limited her mobility. Florence eventually moved into Heritage Square, an assisted living center in Dixon and Bob faithfully visited her every day. Often Bob would take her to church or for an ice cream sundae. Eventually, Bob also moved into Heritage Square, where they enjoyed their time together until Bob's passing in November 2016.

In early 2017, Florence was moved to an assisted living facility near family in Huntsville, Texas. Missing her Midwestern home in Dixon, she never did fully adjusted to her new Southern surroundings but loved being closer to family members who visited her every day.

Florence lived a long, wonderful life that was certainly not free of challenges, but she rose to every occasion with the inspired grace and confidence of someone who knows what is important to her. Florence loved to laugh, was generous of spirit, had a fiery determination and a beautiful heart. She is deeply loved and will be missed by all who held her dear.

We love you, Mom!

Rick, Rollie & Rob

As remembered by Alison and Emily, granddaughters

Gramma Flo is remembered lovingly by her grandkids as someone with a huge sense of adventure and an even bigger sweet tooth. Her visits were always full of lively activities, from making chocolate covered pretzels to taking us all mini-golfing. When we couldn't be together, she would mail us cassette tapes of herself reading stories and talking to us. Gramma encouraged us in our faith by paying us a dollar for every Bible verse we could memorize. Thirty years later, we can still remember those verses! Gramma, we will miss your boisterous laugh and your "ten minute" naps. Heaven just became a little more fun, and we know you'll welcome us there someday. "And you're off!" the captain shouted...

The History of Florence's Flower Card Ministry as told to the Messenger,  
a publication of Hospice for the Rock River Valley in Ohio.

(Post-publication note: Mom was never good at math, dates or timeframes.)

We were living in Cleveland Ohio. It was 1988 that I was told my husband of 43 years had terminal cancer and 6-8 months to live. After a while we were able to talk together, deciding that he would stay at home with me until the end. This is when Hospice became a critical part of our lives – both during his illness and afterwards. I was so grateful to them. That year while visiting in Northern Michigan, I saw greeting cards made by my friend, Fran Meyer, who made them using pressed flowers and selling them in an effort to raise money for her local Hospice. This was something I could do and I did beginning alone but as the work progressed, others joined me. We were able to secure note card stock and use the logo of the Visiting Nurse Association Hospice, Cleveland. We eventually became a group of 10 women who came to my home each week to make flower cards. Some of them had also lost a loved one and eventually it became a part of a support group setting around a large working table each Tuesday from 10- 3, sharing ideas, critiquing designs and learning to care deeply for one another. It was good and our pressed flower cards became quite popular as we were able to sell them at local art shows

and fairs.

After my marriage to Bob Hartzell several years later, I really questioned whether my ministry, and it was, should continue here in Dixon. With Bob's encouragement I decided to try. It has been good with wonderful interest and support from many Dixonites. Bill Shaw of Shaw Printing Company has supplied cards and envelopes. Diane Shehurn of Frameworks has donated our frames, mats and glass for the framed pictures. Many others who have lovely gardens have offered to let us pick flowers. Something we appreciate so much for it is so necessary to have good flowers and greens for our work. We now have a hard-working group consisting of a number of local women. We began working with Rock River Valley Hospice for 2 years contributing over \$4,000 support and are completing our 1st year with KSB Hospice contributing almost \$3,000 this year.

It is to us a vital and important work. We are all enthusiastically committed to what we do and thank you for your support.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 14. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home - Huntsville  
1700 Normal Park Dr.  
Huntsville, TX 77340  
(936) 291-7300  
belinda@shmfh.com

## Celebration Of Life

APR 14. 1:00 PM (CT)

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home - Huntsville  
1700 Normal Park Dr.  
Huntsville, TX 77340  
(936) 291-7300  
belinda@shmfh.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *Florence Anna Hartzell*

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Florence Anna Hartzell.*



April 11, 2018 at 01:11 PM

ST

“ *Sincerely, Michael Ort and the Whole Praxis Team purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Florence Anna Hartzell.*



**Sincerely, Michael Ort and the Whole Praxis Team** - April 06, 2018 at 01:11 PM

CW

“ *My heartfelt sympathy to the family of Florence Hartzell. When Flo came to Dixon, IL she once again opened her home and her heart to making flower cards for Hospice. She taught us the art of drying flowers, card making and friendship. We called ourselves the "Petal Pushers". Today this group is actively working in Flo's memory of card making for Hospice. She was a remarkable woman and I'm a better person for knowing her. Thanks for the friendship Flo.*  
*Carol Orgiesen Wadsworth*

**Carol Orgiesen Wadsworth** - January 11, 2018 at 01:14 PM

DS

*Heaven has opened it gates and welcomed an angel in Flo. Having met her thru the Petal Pusher group here in Dixon I had always thought of her as one of the kindest people I had ever known. She worked with her wonderful group of talented ladies to raise money for Hospice and made many friends who loved her. My sympathies to her family.* *Diane Shehorn-Schnake*

**Diane Shehorn-Schnake** - January 13, 2018 at 08:27 PM

DL

“ Dawn Rainey, LVN lit a candle in memory of Florence Anna Hartzell



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Dawn Rainey, LVN - January 08, 2018 at 10:15 AM

DL

“ Lots of love and sympathy for your family. Mrs. Hartzell will be greatly missed. ❤️

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Dawn Rainey, LVN - January 08, 2018 at 10:15 AM