



## Juanita Lynch

September 4, 1912 - January 27, 2012

Juanita Burton Lynch Juanita Burton Lynch, beloved wife, mother, aunt, grandmother and great grandmother, passed away at her home in Huntsville on January 7, 2012. In a remarkable life that spanned nearly a century, Juanita exemplified the ideals of unselfish service, personal discipline, and deep spiritual commitment she absorbed in childhood. With her zest for living, her loyalty to family and country, and her warm and generous nature, she has long been regarded with reverent affection by her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends. Juanita Burton was born on September 4, 1912, to Wharton Howard Burton, a North Texas settler of Welsh extraction, and Fannie E. (Still) Burton, in Sherman, Texas. Her early years, and those of her two younger brothers Bud and Bo, were shadowed by the death of their young father in the great influenza pandemic of 1918, yet she found solace and strength in the fortitude of her mother and the supportive presence of her father's brothers, Henry and Cleveland. The moral and spiritual center of her household, her father's half brother, Alonzo Burton, known to all as "Brother Lon," was a bedridden invalid who devoted his life to helping others and whose mentorship provided Juanita with a lifelong commitment to the principles articulated in "The Sermon on the Mount." Though the pathways of her adult life took her far away from Sherman, Texas, she never lost her sense of Brother Lon's guiding and compassionate presence. Juanita's 1930 graduation from Sherman High School coincided with the darkest early days of The Great Depression. A talented painter, she attended

Austin College on an art scholarship, but like many Americans at this time, financial and family considerations forced her to put her academic plans on hold. She helped her mother and stepfather, Ephraim Lindsey Stephenson, who had been appointed an official of the Texas Prison System, moved to Huntsville, Texas, then departed for Dallas where she worked as a fashion artist and copywriter for A. / Harris and Company. Over the next two years she would work for Texas newspapers in Tyler and Palestine, and always said that had she not gone into the First National Bank, on a visit to Huntsville, and met Ray Lynch, a local boy who was then working as a teller, she might have made a career of the newspaper business. Juanita Burton married First Lieutenant William Ray Lynch, Jr. on July 9, 1941 at the home of Tibbie and Sam Parish in Huntsville. She saw her husband depart with the 36th division to North Africa less than a year later. Juanita spent the war years teaching art and speech at Sam Houston State Teacher's College. After the war was over, Ray's decision to make the military a career was, in a sense, the great "swerve" of Juanita's life, and she approached the uncertainties of military life with characteristic enthusiasm and verve. Over the next 27 years, Juanita would plant her foot on every continent on the globe save South America and Africa. Whether visiting or taking up residence, this small-town Texas girl would embrace the culture of each locale, from Bonn, Germany in the post-war years to New Delhi, India in the turbulent late 60's. Along the way, she became a loving mother of two children, a peerless diplomatic and military wife, an unparalleled homemaker, an acclaimed painter and teacher of art, an inveterate reader and genealogical researcher, and a leading light of volunteer organizations too numerous to mention. "Let's get busy on this," was her mantra; in 1950-51 while Ray was fighting the Korean War and Juanita was single-mothering two pre-school age children, she graduated cum laude from Sam Houston State Teacher's College with a B.S. in Art, while simultaneously spearheading a project on the vocational rehabilitation of war veterans. In 1952, when Ray's duty took him to Norfolk, Virginia, Juanita joined the Fine Arts faculty of William and Mary College. During Ray's

subsequent tour at The Pentagon in Washington, D.C., Juanita transformed the household basement into a studio teaching art to both children and adults. In 1962, she was elected President of the Officers Wives Club at Fort Benning, Georgia, at that time the largest women's organization in the world, and was designated "Woman of the Year" by the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer. When Ray retired as a Brigadier General in 1971 and the couple moved back to Huntsville to care for their elderly mothers, Juanita immersed herself (pre-internet days) in genealogical research, finding considerable satisfaction in the scholarly adventure of discovering the name, dates and historical connections that bring the past to life. In the course of her investigations she qualified for membership in the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Colonists, and Colonial Dames of the 17th Century. She was an member of the Walker County Genealogical Society and contributed her art work as covers for their publications. Following Ray's death in 1995, Juanita found the friendships forged with her colleagues in these organizations most sustaining and comforting. Juanita's love of reading and research led her to serve on the board of The Huntsville Public Library where despite her failing eyesight she also contributed her artistic skills in the creation of identification markers and book covers. Her special interest in veterans found an outlet in the Hearts Veterans Museum where she worked under the director, Charlotte Olenick, and served on the board. Juanita also took great pride in her honorary membership in the Lone Star Chapter of the United States Marines. She considered her work with the Lynch Family Scholarship Foundation at Sam Houston State University to be both the significant accomplishment of her later years and a labor of love, devoted to the memory of the husband and sisters-in-law she so adored. Juanita was active in her church, St. Stephen's Episcopal, and her membership in Daughters of the King, an organization devoted to intercessory prayers, was one of the joys of her life. Juanita is survived by her children, son, William Ray Lynch III and wife Ruby of

Kingsland, Texas; daughter Tibbie Elizabeth Lynch and husband Harry Grzelewski of Flushing, New York; grandchildren William Ray Lynch IV, Mary Rebecca Lynch, Patrick Lynch Grzelewski and wife Megan Sklar Grzelewski; great granddaughter Ava Mae Grzelewski, and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. She leaves behind her dearest friend Marie Middleton of Houston, Texas and close family friends Doug and Bonnie Strub, Dennis, Sandra, and Denzel Bradford, and Lenora Richardson, all of Huntsville. She also leaves behind her many friends and colleagues from her beloved home town of Huntsville. Final services will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 1 PM Friday, January 27, 2012. Interment will follow at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Lynch Family Scholarship Fund at Sam Houston State University. Those wishing to leave memorial condolences for the family may do so at [www.shmfh.com](http://www.shmfh.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *Juanita Lynch*

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November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ *Hi Dr. Lynch and Mr. G!!*

*I am sorry I write until now, I just want to say I am sorry for your lost and hope now you are doing ok and I am happy you left Costa Rica on time to share more time with your mother Juanita, I read all about her on this page, it was a great life she had!*

*I always remember both of you and your cat Josefina.*

*Big hugs and kisses!*

*Yessica :)*

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**Yessica** - May 20, 2012 at 06:20 PM

RH

“ Dear William & Tibbie,

*I would like to share my condolences with you upon the passing of your mother this past January. I met your mother through email and phone conversations discussing genealogy a number of years ago. She had shared that she had a picture of my Great Grandparents Barbara Jean and Bragg Scott. From that conversation, I grew a friendship.*

*Your mother was a wealth of information and a pleasant woman to talk to, though I never met her in person. I thank you for the beautiful obituary and the love that you shared with her. She loved you very much.*

*May God grant you peace and comfort during this time of mourning.*

*In Christ,  
Rev. Bryan Huffman*

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**Rev. Bryan Huffman** - February 07, 2012 at 11:22 AM

PC

“*Juanita was an inspiration to all those entering the senior years, as she remained so vibrant, interested, and interesting. She made all sorts of clever arrangements to continue an active life despite loss of vision. During my 25 years as Special Collections Librarian at SHSU I used Juanita as a unique source of local information many times. I still remember the time she organized a reunion of Gen. Lynch's old buddies from Texas' 36th Division here in Huntsville, capped off with a presentation of books by soldiers (and a nurse) from that notable unit of the U.S. Army to the SHSU Library as well as the Public Library. All who knew her are aware of her ability as a story teller, and I kept trying to pin her down for an oral history session of tales relating to life around the Square during the days she worked as a waitress in Huntsville's famous Cafe Raven; Glynda Turner scooped me, however, getting those memories as well as many others for posterity. She will be missed!*

*PAUL CULP*

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**Paul and Joan Culp** - January 16, 2012 at 01:44 PM

KH

“*I didn't know Mrs. Lynch until about a year ago. She was a customer of Town & Country Cleaners and she was on my route that I drive for them. It was not until I read the obituary that I realized that she had experiences and credentials that confirmed my thoughts that she was truly a quality lady. She would often invite me into her home and we would chat about various topics. On one particular hot day while her daughter was visiting with her, she said to me, "You must really be hot today. Would you like some water?" I accepted the offer of a cold bottled water. I will miss seeing her as I continue with my duties. She was truly a gracious lady. God Bless Mrs. Lynch!!*

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**Kal Hooper** - January 15, 2012 at 08:30 PM

MR

“ Dear Aunt Ruby and family, we are so sorry for your loss. May God send peace to your hearts and minds during this difficult time.  
Love Always, Mandy and Roy, John, and Kaia.

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**Mandy Rushing** - January 14, 2012 at 10:59 PM

VC

“ O my dear friend, Juanita. What special and beautiful memories I have working with you on the cover of our Oakwood Cemetery Book for the Walker County Genealogical Society. You made me welcome in your home as I basked in your marvelous artistic talent. You said that if I would just put your hand in the right place (on the paper), that you could show me what to do. Though nearly blind, you were determined to see the project through ... and that you did! Your generosity was a model for all of us who were privileged to know you. Thanks for making Huntsville your home and allowing us to be part of your loving "family." I look forward to seeing you again one day.

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**Virginia D. "Jinny" Chastain** - January 12, 2012 at 09:32 PM

BS

“ *Juanita... Treasured Forever*

*Through pinch-hitting now and again when my husband's driving business became double-booked, I became acquainted with Juanita on a casual basis for a few years. From the first, Juanita was one of the special ones and I found myself volunteering before asked when I saw these conflicts coming up. (And Doug thought I was just being helpful!:])*

*Juanita needed to learn how to handle e-mail, navigate www searches and how to keep what she found in MicrosoftWORD files. I needed her recollections of the era of my parents and to just allow her persona to permeate my being ... a perfect match! Somehow, being with someone who understood the times my mother had lived in, helped me work through the grief of losing her. Our natural affinity for each other drew us very close over the next 14+ years... closer than I realized until she was nearly gone.*

*When I became a regular fixture in her life, Juanita was barely 85, with somewhat dimming eyesight and a captivatingly vibrant personality (which stayed with her to the end). She earnestly cared about everything and everybody she encountered, making a positive difference wherever she saw opportunity. I found her addictive, and was glad that Juanita asked me to do more and more for her. So, here I am, with a big empty-feeling place in my heart and the joy of having had her in my life. Some aches are outweighed by the joys they bring. This is one of those times.*

*Bonnie A Strub*

*(Blessed with the privilege of being an assistant to Juanita)*

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**Bonnie A Strub** - January 12, 2012 at 01:50 PM

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CW

“ Farewell to a beautiful lady. I looked forward to seeing her beautiful smiling face every Friday when we delivered her lunch. She always blessed me and I know she is smiling down on us all now.

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**Chuck & Gretchen Sprague [meals on wheels]** - January 12, 2012 at 10:40 AM

JJ

“ My prayers are with the family at this sad time. She was a remarkable lady.

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**Jeannine Jacoby** - January 12, 2012 at 08:29 AM

LW

“ On behalf of all of Megan's family in Spartanburg, I want to express our sympathy at the loss of Miss Jaunita. Marla and I came back from our trip to Texas telling everyone about Miss Jaunita. I am grateful to her for taking Megan into her life and I am fortunate I was able to meet her. You all have been very blessed to have such a force of nature in your lives.

*The Spartanburg Branch of the family.*

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**Libby Wilson** - January 11, 2012 at 07:17 PM

CF

“ Ray & Ruby, Tibbie & Harry, We are saddened at your loss and rejoicing that God has brought another angel home to be with him. This story about your mother is beautiful and inspiring, to say the least. We pray for you to find comfort and peace during this difficult time.

*Carol & Stacy Foster*

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**Carol Foster** - January 11, 2012 at 05:10 PM

MB

“ I am saddened to hear of Mrs. Lynch passing, but take comfort in knowing that she has joined my grandmother and other many friends who loved her in heaven. She always symbolized the meaning of a true southern lady who loved her family, her country and her friends. She will be greatly missed and this community has been truly blessed to have had her in it. God Bless~My thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time.

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**Melissa Kimbrough Beardsley** - January 11, 2012 at 05:02 PM

FW

“ Ray - we were so sorry to hear of the passing of your mother. I know she will be greatly missed by everyone, and we want you to know we are thinking of you during this time of your loss. Frank and Pat Willingham

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**Frank and Pat Willingham** - January 11, 2012 at 02:06 PM

WG

“ Dear Ray, Ruby, Tibbie, Harry and the rest of the Family -- Martha and I were so saddened by this news. Your Mom was a very special person and we always delighted in stopping by when passing through Huntsville to get her take on the world. A truly amazing lady! But, like my mom's passing only a few days before, this is really a time of celebration, for both are now safe in the everlasting arms of Jesus. God bless you all.

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**Wayne & Martha Gosnell** - January 11, 2012 at 02:05 PM

DC

“ Dear Tibbie, Ray and the entire Lynch clan,

*The Daughters of the American Colonists wish to send our sincere condolences to you all on the death of your mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. She was so loved by every organization she belonged to because she gave 100% of herself to each one. She was so active in DAC and will be truly missed. Huntsville was so blessed to have her choose it as her hometown.*

*With love,*

*Patsy Ann Reed Chaplain DAC*

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**Daughters of the American Colonists** - January 10, 2012 at 11:07 AM

PR

“ *I was so sorry to learn of the passing of Mrs. Lynch. She was a remarkable woman and I know her family will miss her terribly. My thoughts and prayers are with them in this sad time.*

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**Pam Ransom** - January 10, 2012 at 10:51 AM

LG

“ *Tibbie, Harry and Family:*

*I was very saddened to hear of your mothers passing. She was one of my very favorite people and I will miss her happy voice.*

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**Lizabeth Gray** - January 09, 2012 at 04:52 PM

NJ

“ *I am so sorry for the loss of Juanita Lynch. She and her husband were a delight to know. Both of them were so very nice to me during my tenure as SHSU Alumni Director (1977-1992). Truly a gentleman and a lady. Norma Dell Jones of Lovelady, TX.*

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**Norma Dell Jones** - January 09, 2012 at 12:40 PM

SH

“ On behalf of the J.B. Gordon Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, I wish to express our deepest sympathy at the death of this magnificent Southern lady. She so loved our society and we are grateful we were blessed to have our first meeting of the year in her home to celebrate her birthday. It was my honor to meet Juanita for the first time here. I introduced myself and she said, "Sue, Sue, Sue is true. The next time I see you I will say you are true Sue." We then discussed her method of remembering names. Thank you so much for letting us share this "Steel Magnolia". Sue Hardy, 1st Vice President, J.B. Gordon Chapter, UDC, Huntsville.

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**Sue Hardy** - January 08, 2012 at 10:12 PM