



Virginia Irvin

February 1, 1924 - May 8, 2008

Virginia Irvin was born to Austin and Ruth Irvin in Everman, Texas, February 1, 1924 and passed away on May 5, 2008 in Trinity, Texas. She and her parents moved to Houston when she was age three. After graduation from John H. Reagan High School in 1941, she entered Sam Houston State Teachers College in the fall of that year, received her B.A. degree in 1945 and her M.A. degree in 1947. She began her teaching career at Sam Houston in 1943 as a teaching assistant, where she directed the music department choir in the absence of Charles Lindsay, who was on leave with the wartime USO. She was appointed as Instructor in 1946 and taught at Sam Houston until her retirement, seeing the University through three name changes: Sam Houston State Teachers College, Sam Houston State College and Sam Houston State University. The advancement of music education was the focus of her professional life, as she taught at the University level, but maintained contact with the educational process from pre-school to college through her own contacts with students at all these levels. At Sam Houston she served as Area Coordinator and Advisor to music-education students, was organizer and director of Kodaly programs, co-editor of the Department of Music alumni newsletter, and taught in the preparatory program of the Department of Music. She served as director of the University Women's Choir for thirty years. Her choir was noted for its annual Christmas concerts. She directed thirty-seven SHSU musical productions in cooperation with the Drama and Dance departments. She was the developer of the Department of Music Kodaly

program at the Masters level. She organized study tours to Hungary and Austria for Sam Houston Kodaly students. This effort linked Sam Houston State University's Department of Music with the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary, in a co-operative program. Miss Irvin was awarded the SHSU Excellence in Teaching Award in 1977, the SHSU Excellence in Service Award in 1986, and was made an Honorary Life Member of the Kodaly Educators of Texas in 1984. She was presented with the Outstanding Alumni award from the SHSU chapter of Alpha Chi in 1986. Invited to participate in the International Kodaly Symposium which was held in Belgium in 1983, she was chosen as one of twenty-four international contributing authors for the book Reflections on Kodaly, published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the International Kodaly Society. She was active in the International Kodaly Society and served as National President of the Organization of American Kodaly Educators. She was co-founder of Kodaly Educators of Texas, one of the founders of the Gulf Coast Orff Association, a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, the Music Educators National Conference, and of Pi Kappa Lambda, Sigma Alpha Iota, the Texas Folklore Society, Alpha Psi Omega, Alpha Chi, Zeta Tau Alpha, Philomathean Alumni of SHSU and the SHSU Alumni Association. She became a member of the Philomathean Literary Society in 1941 and was associated with that organization for over 50 years. She became sponsor of the "Philos" in 1948 and was active with that group until 1959, when the Philos became affiliated with the national Zeta Tau Alpha fraternity. She was active in bringing national sororities to the Sam Houston campus, was associated with Zeta Tau Alpha since 1959, and was faculty advisor and rush advisor for the organization. She was a member of Elkins Lake Baptist Church, where she taught in the children's choir-training program. She taught Kodaly-related music classes to Huntsville children, served on the Huntsville Arts Commission, taught in the Huntsville HEAP programs, and participated in many other community service programs. In 1986, the Texas sesquicentennial year, she was recognized by the City of Huntsville for Outstanding

Achievement in the Arts. She was preceded in death by her parents. Services will be held Thursday May 8, 2008 at 2 PM at Elkins Lake Baptist Church with Dr. Ken Huggins officiating. Interment will follow at the Adickes Addition of Oakwood Cemetery under the direction of Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home. She will lie in state through out the day Wednesday with visitation from 5 to 7 PM at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations should be made to the Virginia and Ruth Irvin Scholarship Fund at SHSU Student Advancement - Box 2537 Huntsville, 77341-2537, be sure to note Virginia & Ruth Irving Scholarship Fund, or Elkins Lake Baptist Church. Special thanks go to Dr. T.C. Cole, Jr. for his compassionate care of Ginny over many years, and to the Huntsville Health Care Center for their kindness during her final months. Those wishing to leave memorial condolences may do so at www.shmfh.com.

Tribute Wall



“ Virginia Irvin

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ Dear Family of Ginny:

I was just surfing the web tonight and learned of the passing of my dear sweet teacher. I was a piano student of John Paul's and in her last Women's Chorus at SHSU, December 1978. What a privilege and an honor it was to know Ginny. I was always inspired by her vast knowledge, wisdom and perfection of her craft; but all these special traits were well-received by students first and foremost because of her love for them. How I've sung the chorus many times "I love to hear the story which angel voices tell....how once a king from glory came down on earth to dwell," learned, of course, in her choir. Ginny lived her faith, which was the greatest witness for Christ anyone could be. I will never forget her perfume, "Inigma." Because of her, I have a bottle; and I think of her instantly whenever I smell it.

My last contact with Ginny was in this same weekend in Nov, 1994, at Holiday in the Pines here in Nac. She came to work a booth with her good friend, Annie Mary Jones, whose children are my friends. How saddened I am today, some 18-months later, to learn of her passing.

May the Lord bless and keep you all and may you be comforted knowing how many lives she touched all through her life. I shall never forget her.

Melanie Martin Theiss - November 17, 2009 at 08:52 PM

AP

“ Ginny sponsored many workshops and conferences when she was at Sam Houston State University. It was during one of those events I met this amazing dynamo. She was always giving and gracious as a host, and I learned so much by just being in her presence and observing her teach teachers how to teach. My Prayers are with her family.

Aaron B. Patterson - August 20, 2008 at 04:58 PM

BM

“ I was so sorry to hear of the passing of Ginny Irvin. Unfortunately, I did not hear the news until after the service, or I would have been present.

I was on the SHSU music faculty, 1965-76, and one of **the** highpoints of my Sam career was the five musicals I conducted, with Ginny, of course, serving as vocal coach/ass't. director:

1969: Sweet Charity

1970: Finian's Rainbow

1973: My Fair Lady

1974: Cabaret

1975: Fiddler on the Roof

Each of these productions certainly approached a fully-professional standard, thanks in no small measure to Ginny's high expectations from students and colleagues alike.

R. I. P.

Bob Morgan - June 03, 2008 at 04:11 PM

CH

“ Ginny was my choir director, professor, dorm mother at the ZTA House and dear friend. She was one of my bridesmaids in my wedding..a great influence in my life through her music and friendship. The world was a better place because of her. She radiated wherever she went and gave us all music that would last a lifetime.

Connie Hilton Harper - May 15, 2008 at 01:59 PM

ER

“ Our dear Ginny was so special to me. She was a great influence on my life. I first met her in September, 1950, when I auditioned for the Girls' Choir. I remained under Ginny's direction until May, 1953. Not only was she my choir director, she was my professor in a music education class. My husband, Wilton, took voice from Ginny. You didn't know her but a few minutes until you realized she was a most unusual, gifted person. Ginny was a beautiful person to me, my husband, and ever student whose life she touched. What a loss! I loved her dearly!

Elizabeth Maddox Robinson - May 09, 2008 at 06:30 PM

TB

“ Ms. Irvin was such a warm, kind and fun lady. I was at Sam in the 90's and she was an advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha. I had the pleasure of working with her for several years. She was such an inspiration and had so much love for our chapter. She was a true Zeta lady and a wonderful role model. She will be missed. God Bless her family.

Terri Brown - May 09, 2008 at 02:07 PM

JJ

“ Our very sincere condolences on the death of Ginny. We knew her and her parents since the days in their old Houston neighborhood. She was a very talented and dedicated woman. Our visits with her in her Huntsville home over the years were a pleasure. She was always eager to show us her yard and plants. She will be greatly missed.

Joyce & John Jenkins - May 08, 2008 at 04:47 PM

BC

“ The world has lost a wonderful and gracious lady with the passing of Ginny. She was a terrific neighbor and friend and we will truly miss her.

Betty Wolfe & Brian Custer - May 08, 2008 at 01:24 PM

BR

“ I will never forget the happy times we all had in Girls Choir with Ginny. Dean and I were honored to have her sing at our wedding almost 55 years ago. She sang like an angel. She had a beautiful spirit for all to see and was a wonderful example for all who were blessed to know her. Ginny and the happy times at SHSTC will always be in my heart. Another Angel Voice in Heaven.

Beverly Moore Robinson - May 08, 2008 at 11:46 AM

MW

“ Ginny's legacy will live on through her students and the thousands of children who have been touched by her love of music. Ginny's love for elementary music inspired me to get an all level certificate just so I could be in her classes. I will always be grateful for her inspiration.

Peace of Christ, Mike Ware 1976 SHSU grad

Mike Ware - May 08, 2008 at 10:30 AM

GM

“ As part of my Undergrad degree, I was required to take Ginny's classes. I had more fun as Ginny challenged us with to notate the songs she sang to us that we included in our Song Collections. I remember that Ginny always tried to bring out the best in her students and she always had an encouraging word. Ginny Irvin was truly the woman the writer described in Proverbs 31. It was my honor and my pleasure to have had the opportunity to study with Ginny. She will be greatly missed.

George Martin - May 08, 2008 at 10:19 AM

CC

“ I was at Sam Houston from 1980-1985 and was very lucky to have had Ms. Irvin instruct me in bringing music and so much more to elementary students. I still do what do today because I want to pass on the love of music and children Ginny gave to us. God bless you.

Carol Herrera Colvin - May 08, 2008 at 12:19 AM

KB

“ Ginny was a great lady--kind, gentle, always composed, but full of the joy of life and living. It was my privilege to sing in her Women's Choir throughout my time at Sam Houston, and memories of the Christmas cantata often brought me back, to stand with other former choir members in the audience as the current choir sang their hearts out in Old Main. I was also a Zeta and remember so well how Ginny's kindness, tempered with firmness, kept a houseful of unruly, high-spirited girls under control. Years later, Ginny honored me by nominating me for a Distinguished Alumni award from Sam Houston and shepherding that award through until she succeeded in seeing me win that honor. Once you were one of Ginny's "girls," she never forgot you, and we will never forget her.

Karey Patterson Bresenhan - May 07, 2008 at 11:58 PM

JS

“ Virginia Irvin was an institution at Sam Houston State University and not only to the music department. She was a caring and sharing teacher and friend and she will be missed dearly. The dedication to her art was only surpassed by the gentleness of her spirit.

Jimmy L Smith - May 07, 2008 at 10:37 PM

SS

“ Women's choir was always my favorite class. I loved Ginny.Sue Hancock Sylvester class of 1962.

Sue Hancock Sylvester - May 07, 2008 at 10:19 PM

BD

“ I didn't know I could lead, but Ginny knew, she recognized that quality in me, encouraged me, boosted me, and low and behold, I did lead,

Hopefully I encouraged others as she encouraged me

Teachers and mentors like Ginny cannot be replaced,

Betty Berry Dugat - May 07, 2008 at 09:53 PM

JM

“ Ginny was my lifesaver when I enrolled at Sam. She always gave me encouragement each time we talked. I was in Women's Choir throughout my education. She was an inspiration to me and to many she taught. There are many women whose goal was to be just like Ginny. To this day I still treasure the memories of Women's Choir and Ginny.

Joy Ann Merricks - May 07, 2008 at 09:33 PM

VC

“ My best girlfriend (Betty Wilson Scamardo) and I were elected into the Philos in 1952 and Ginny was the "House Mother."

I remember her very fondly and the manner she ensured that all meetings would be properly conducted and made sure there would be no meanness among the girls, that is so prevalent today. I had a wonderful time at SHSTC and being a Philo made it more special. I am proud to have known her.

Virginia Pigue Callaway - May 07, 2008 at 08:30 PM

GC

“ I took two of Ms. Irvins' music courses at Sam in 1966 for my Elementary Education degree. I will always remember her enthusiastic "spirit" and gentle but firm instructions. I am so sorry to here of her loss. She was a real treasure to those of us who were privileged to know and be taught by her.

Gordon H. Crocker - May 07, 2008 at 07:37 PM

CW

“ Zeta Tau Alpha was blessed the day in May 1959 when we were all initiated together. Ginny is responsible for so many of us loving Zeta today. For three years of my college life I lived in the House with Ginny; every day she taught us in some way; lifes little lessons that perhaps we were unaware of at the time. Ginny was an inspiration, teacher, sister, and friend. My friendship with her only grew beyond my college days. Through the years so many things in my life have brought me back to Ginny and her influence on my as a person. You are loved and will be missed, Claire

Claire Winn - May 07, 2008 at 05:03 PM

MI

“ Michael and I loved Virginia, "Jenny" we have missed her and will miss her even more. Thanks be to God that we will see each other again. Betsy and Mike Maloney

Milligan-Maloney - May 07, 2008 at 04:15 PM

VP

“ Ginny was a dedicated member of the Delta Zeta Chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha at Sam Houston State University. We, of the Fraternity, are richer for having known Ginny and having had her as a part of our Sisterhood.

Verna Hicks Patton - May 07, 2008 at 03:23 PM

MB

“ As a classmate from Reagan Hi. and Sam Houston-my pleasure was to have known Virginia and what a wonderful life she has had since we graduated. She will be missed but only our pass tells our future.

Myrle Grubbs Benton--Sealy, Texas

myrle benton - May 07, 2008 at 01:02 PM

JS

“ Former members of the SHSU Women's Choir and other friends and colleagues are invited to join in a treble choir for Ginny's funeral as a musical tribute to this remarkable musician, teacher, and friend. Singers will meet at the church at 1 PM to rehearse prior to the service.

Janet Scarcella - May 07, 2008 at 11:41 AM

GL

“ To Ginny:

Who inspired us to teach the world to love music. Always a lady and an example for us to follow, you demanded excellence from us in all endeavors of our lives. I know that you are singing with the angels and probably directing the choir.

Peace to your family and those that love you.

Grace Littlefield - May 07, 2008 at 08:22 AM

BD

“ Ginny, i met you briefly at your home a few years ago at christmas time, visiting you with rebecca byrd. you were so gracious and friendly, showing insurmountable hospitality to a stranger, sharing your dolls & christmas trees along and many other keynotes of your life. i will carry your image and the thoughts always.

A Journey

*Greetings
from an Angel above
I bring to you
tidings of love.*

*Take me up,
I wanted to say
Let me stand
in a brighter ray.*

*Let me journey to a place unknown
a city made of crystal stone,*

*And fill the gaps
I left behind
Add to my being
a brighter shine*

*Open up that last closed door
put my feet on the polished floor*

*To return before the break of day
and begin my life in a different way.....*

billie dowdy - May 07, 2008 at 12:36 AM

GG

“ Ginny was the embodiment of the SHSU motto - *A Measure of a Life is Its Service*. The thousands of children whose lives have been and will be enriched by her instruction to generations of educators are a testament to this great and gentle woman. So many memories of the beautiful music of the Women's Choir flood back today as we remember Ginny. We will never forget you.

Greg and Dani Gathright - May 06, 2008 at 05:52 PM

NJ

“ Virginia, how very much you have given of yourself to so many, many students. Those you taught and to those whose path you crossed. We all loved you and you will be missed by so many people. My prayers are with your family and all of your Sam Houston Family! Norma Dell Jones of Lovelady.

Norma Dell Jones - May 06, 2008 at 05:48 PM