



Lelia H. Windom

November 24, 2024

Lelia H. Windom passed away peacefully at home on November 24, 2024. She was born at Sarasota Hospital (later renamed SMH), a two-story building with 30 beds, on January 16, 1931. She is preceded in death by her parents, James David and Elsie Porter Harmon, her younger sister Ellen McLean, and her husband Robert E. Windom.

Lelia attended Southside Elementary School and then Sarasota High School from 7-12 grade. She was a cheerleader, homecoming queen, and junior class president. As a sophomore she became sweethearts with a new student in her class from Ohio, Bob Windom, the son of Sarasota's first city manager, Ross Windom. After graduation in 1948 she attended William & Mary College for 1 ½ years before transferring to Duke University (Bob Windom happened to be a Duke student). She returned to Sarasota for a year after graduation, being named Queen of Sarasota by the Chamber of Commerce. Lelia and Bob married in 1953 at the First Christian Church in Sarasota.

They moved from Durham to Dallas where Dr. Bob did his internal medicine residency at Parkland Hospital. They returned to Sarasota with their three children in 1960 to raise their family and become a permanent fixture of the Sarasota community. She became active in the Garden Club, Junior League, Van Wezel Advisory Committee, American Heart Association, Southside Elementary PTA, New College Foundation, Cotillion Club, and Asolo Theatre

Festival Association. Giving back to the city that she loved came natural to her.

She was a Southern Belle with all the class and manners associated with that persona. She loved hosting parties, traveling with friends, playing tennis at the Field Club, going to the movies, and sipping on wine. She felt blessed to never want for anything in her life and to make it to 93 years old “without a pain in my body.” She spread that optimism and joy to all she met. And she met a lot of people, routinely having social engagements 3-4 nights a week.

In 1986 she moved from South Drive in Cherokee Park to North Drive on the National Institutes of Health campus in Bethesda, MD where Bob served as Assistant Secretary of Health under President Reagan. While she enjoyed the DC area, she missed her natural surroundings of Sarasota, so would come back every few months to check on her family home. She was happy to return to Sarasota for good in 1989.

She is survived by her three children, Bob Jr (Missy), Ross (Carolyn) and Hugh (Anne), grandchildren Caroline Nigro (Chris), Porter (Megan), Grant (Amanda), Reed, Sarah, and Emerson, and great-grandchildren Walker and Holden Nigro and Kennedy and Madison Windom.

A funeral service will be held at the Church of the Palms on Saturday November 30, 2024 at 11:00 am.

The family would like to offer a special thanks to her loving caregivers Cindy Owens, June Hartman, and Kate Hancock’s team at Integrity Home Companions.

Memorial donations may be made to the Church of the Palms, 3224 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34239.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

NOV **30**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of the Palms
3224 Bee Ridge Road
Sarasota, FL 34239