

Winnsboro Native, Noted Artist

# Late Laura Douglas Called "Dean of Abstractionists," Washington Paper

(By Edward J. McGuire, Staff Reporter, Washington Post)

Funeral services were held yesterday in Winnsboro, S. C., for Laura Glenn Douglas, who, as both teacher and artist, had considerable influence on contemporary art.

Miss Douglas, who lived at 1734 P st. n.w., died Friday at George Washington University Hospital as the result of complications that developed after she was operated on for a broken hip.

In the late 1920s and 1930s Miss Douglas was among the vanguard of American artists who engaged in abstract and post-impressionist art.

As an abstractionist, Miss Douglas' technique was to try to capture the essence of her subject rather than to merely copy its form. As a teacher, she tried to inculcate her students with this idea as well as to teach them the skills she had learned while studying in New York and Europe.

Many local artists have studied under her and been influenced by her work. Referred to as the dean of abstractionist instructors here by one of these artists, Miss Douglas had mostly recently taught at the Holton Arms School and the YWCA Art Department.

She had also taught, both privately and in schools, in Europe. Recognized as an accomplished artist in her own right, Miss Douglas had exhibited her paintings in Paris, Florence, Rome, Munich and in one-man shows throughout the United States. Her work has been shown here at the Duncan Phillips and Corcoran galleries.

During the 1930s she was a teacher and a painter for the WPA. Her work there included more pioneering in the field of post-impressionism and paintings of the South, which were noted for their perceptive and understanding treatment of the south-

ern Negro. Some of the murals she did for Government buildings at that time are still known and admired.

Born in South Carolina, Miss Douglas received her early art training in New York where she studied at the National Academy of Design, the Art Students League and the School of Fine and Applied Art.

Later she went to Europe where she studied under Andre Lhote and Ferdinand Léger in Paris and Hans Hofmann in Munich. It was after 10 years of study in Europe that she returned to the United States to become one of the early abstractionists here.

(Note: The foregoing article was mailed to Spencer R. McMaster by a friend in Washington, D. C.)

# Rites Held Here Monday for Miss Douglas, Artist

The community was saddened Friday by the passing of Miss Laura Glenn Douglas of Washington, D. C. Miss Douglas was a beloved native of Winnsboro.

Daughter of the late Alexander Scott Douglas, lawyer, and his wife, Sally McCants Douglas, of Winnsboro, she was born in the Douglas home on South Congress Street, the building now known as the Fairfield Country Club. She was predeceased by a sister & brother, Isabelle Douglas Morrison and McCants Douglas.

Laura Douglas spent her childhood in the Douglas home. Her family were early staunch Presbyterians who played an important part in the building up of the Presbyterian congregations in the county and town, and also took a keen interest in civic affairs.

Through the years displaying a leaning towards the artistic, she attended the College for Women in Columbia, studying art. Later she went to more advanced classes under well-known teachers in New York City. For many years she was tutored by famous painters in Italy and France. In France she exhibited as the only foreign student in important French showings, thus making for herself an international reputation as well as gaining a national reputation in her own country.

In recent years Miss Douglas lived in Washington, D. C., where she had a private art school and taught in the Y.W.C.A. there, while having one-man shows of her work in cities over the nation.

Possessing the characteristics of thoughtfulness for her fellowman, rare charm, deep human affection, and a constantly abiding faith, she drew to her people of all walks of life. She had a wide circle of close friends.

She is survived by five nephews: Moultrie D. Douglas of Winnsboro; Dwight Douglas of New Milford, New Jersey; W. D. Douglas of Harleysville, Pa.; Z. H. Douglas of Jacksonville, Fla.; Barton Douglas of Gainesville, Fla. Also surviving are six nieces: Mrs. John C. Buchanan of Winnsboro; Mrs. John N. McMaster, Jr., of Columbia; Miss Isabelle Morrison of Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Robert Harrington of Kingsport, Tenn.; Mrs. Barry James of Greensboro, N. C.; and Mrs. Spalding Smith of Gainesville, Fla.

Services were held Monday at eleven o'clock at Stion Presbyterian Church, Winnsboro, with the pastor, the Rev. Robert E. Smith, officiating. Interment was in the Presbyterian Cemetery.

Active pallbearers were J. M. Lyles, Jr., H. Norwood Obear, M. H. Doty, Sr., Albert Doty, Davis Arnette, John Tabb Heyward and Hugh Roberts. A.W.

*Original Clippings in file 10 Mrs Alice Walker M.S.*