

OBITUARIES



Pearson

UNITA O'NEAL PEARSON

JENKINSVILLE — Matriarch and businesswoman Unita O'Neal Pearson of Jenkinsville passed away on Saturday, Oct. 13, 2012, at Gwinnett Medical Center in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Mrs. Pearson lived in Duluth, Ga. for many years with her three surviving daughters, Mercy (Grady Thomas), Pam (Ronley Williams), Marvy (James Moore) and her grandchildren.

She was born on Oct. 27, 1926, to Walter Wise and Hattie Lakin O'Neal in Jenkinsville, where she lived most of her life. Her husband, the late Fred Douglas Pearson Sr., also of Jenkinsville, and her youngest child, Walter Wayne (Vanessa) Pearson, preceded her in death.

In addition to her daughters, Pearson leaves two devoted sons, Fred Douglas (Deborah) Pearson Jr. of Greenville and William Vincent (Renetta) Pearson Sr. of Irmo to cherish her memories.

Her two nieces, Ruby (Celess) Young of Columbia and Hattie (late Richard) Black of Inkster, Mich., enjoyed a close relationship with their aunt and hold her memory close to heart.

Pearson was educated at Camp Liberty High School in Jenkinsville and known as one of the star basketball players during her school years. She worshipped at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church and also served in the church's lay reader ministry and was a member of the vestry.

Pearson, known to many as "Ms. Nita", was an influential member of the Jenkinsville and Fairfield communities.

Her contributions and volunteerism spanned a wide variety of interests, including her positions of the boards of the Fairfield County Memorial Hospital and the Fairfield County Recreation Commission, a volunteer "fire woman" with Jenkinsville Volunteer Fire Department and a "shade tree mechanic".

Perhaps one of her most significant accomplishments was her role as a founding member of the Jenkinsville Water Company Inc., an effort

that brought a water system to the community of Jenkinsville and remains intact today.

She also served as the operator of the water company, responsible for every facet of the department from meter reading, to billing, collections and quality control.

Her legacy as the "water lady" was known for many miles throughout the county.

Pearson's professional pursuits were entrepreneurial in nature and she blazed trails for women every step of the way. Whether she was earning income with her tractor, dump truck, pulpwood truck, mechanic prowess or volunteering with the fire department, it was clear that she was courageous enough to be a female in these non-traditional occupations.

She was very proud of her children and their professional accomplishments as they followed in her footsteps.

Pearson was an inspiration to many, friend to most and stranger to none in the way she travelled throughout her community.

She was sought out to help with difficult situations, consulted when complex matters needed navigation, and often was included in crucial matters pertaining to friends and family.

Pearson was always there for nieces and nephews and as "Grandma" was an important and strong presence in the lives of each and every one of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Whether she was known as "Ms. Pearson, Ms. Nita, Aunt Nita, Grandma or the Water Lady," she was always there with compassion and dependable action.

A true sports fan, she was regularly seen in the stands (and sometimes as a sideline referee) at many basketball games, a sport that she excelled at in her youth.

Her stories have brought smiles to many faces and this will be emblazoned in memories for years to come.

JP Holley Funeral Home is handling arrangements and the family will accept visitors at a wake in Winnsboro (Russell McCutchen Funeral Home, 324 S. Vanderhorst St.) at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 17.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 18 at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Jenkinsville, followed by a burial at the church's family cemetery.