

# Ridgeway's Laura Thomas is named state's 'Mother of the Year for 1992'



Laura Muller Thomas

By Pauline Patrick  
Staff Writer

**R**idgeway Mayor Laura Muller Thomas has been named South Carolina Mother of the Year for 1992.

She has the distinction of being the second member of her family to receive the honor. Her mother, Lottie Muller, was Mother of the Year in 1951.

Mrs. Thomas was sponsored by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, of which she is a member.

Gov. Carroll Campbell will present Mrs. Thomas' plaque on March 26 in the Governor's Office. Later that day, Gov. and Mrs. Campbell will host a reception at the Governor's Mansion for Mrs. Thomas, her family and close friends.

She will also participate in the National Mother of the Year competition in Los Angeles on April 23-24.

Mrs. Thomas was born in Blythewood, the daughter of Lee Muller and Lottie Lavinia Muller, and grew up on a farm. Her family were members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and she was active in Luther League and as a Sunday School teacher.

A graduate of Blythewood High School, where she played on the basketball team, she received her degree in business administration with teacher certification

from the University of South Carolina in 1941. After graduation, she married Ridgeway merchant Robert Walton Thomas.

**T**he Thomas family grew over the next 10 years to include four children: Robert Jr., Lee, Eleanor and Laura. Mrs. Thomas devoted herself to being wife and mother while still finding time to be active in civic and church activities.

She was confirmed an Episcopalian after her marriage and has served on numerous Diocesan committees as well as being a leader of St. Stephen's. She is a layreader and Sunday School teacher at the church and has served on the Mission Committee and as Junior Warden.

During the years her children were growing up, Mrs. Thomas was leader for Cub Scouts, Brownie Scouts and Girl Scouts. Her involvement with Scouting spanned more than 20 years.

When her youngest daughter entered second grade, Mrs. Thomas began teaching business at Ridgeway High School. For the next 25 years, she taught business at Winnsboro High School and Fairfield Career Center in Winnsboro. She received a master's degree from the University of South Carolina in 1978.

Mrs. Thomas became interested in government during the 14 years her husband served as Ridgeway's mayor. After Thomas' death, she announced as candidate for mayor in 1986 and ran unopposed. She is now serving her second term in the office.

**M**rs. Thomas's awards include state and county Teacher of the Year and Fairfield County Woman of the Year. She is vice president of St. Stephen's Churchwomen, vice president of the Ridgeway Garden Club, member of the board of directors of the Bank of Ridgeway, member of the Education and Business Partnership Board of Fairfield County and board member of the Fairfield County Mental Health Association and the Fairfield County Historical Society.

Mrs. Thomas's son, Robert, works with her at the Thomas Company. Lee is an environmentalist in Atlanta, and Eleanor Thomas Parrish is a teacher in Camden.

Laura Thomas Crisp, her youngest child, died in 1983. Mrs. Thomas helped rear her grandson, Issac Crisp, for several years until his father entered medical school.

In addition to Issac, Mrs. Thomas has eight more grandchildren and one foster grandchild.

