



Orael Anne Hairfield

Nov. 9, 1924 - Aug. 10, 2022

Orael Anne Hairfield, our beloved one, has journeyed to a far better place we can not yet go. She drifted away peacefully at her residence, surrounded by her children, after living a full life which spanned 97 years.

A New York native, growing up, she graduated from Eastchester, NY High School and attended Lenox Hill Hospital School of Nursing before leaving to begin a new adventure with the love of her life. Joe was a handsome, blue-eyed blonde who was attending King's Point Merchant Marine Academy during World War II, and she was swept away by his Southern charm.

They lived in NY while he served his country and they had the first 2 of their 4 children. Later they moved to his hometown where he began a small business. She did a variety of work

including time with Mimosa Insurance, leaving after the birth of her fourth child to start a new chapter in philanthropy and continuing as bookkeeper for Joe's business.

The following description of Orael was penned by Edna Mae Herman, Community Living Editor for The News Herald:

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If TV made a cartoon show based on Orael Hairfield's active life, the artists no doubt would draw little whirlwinds in place of her feet and a smile so broad, so spontaneous, so genuine that even trees and houses would mirror her enthusiasm.

"And, if such a fantasy were to come to pass, chances are Orael would never see it. Her time, rather, is lovingly consumed in so many other, more worthwhile projects — for her church, her community and her business associations.

"Indeed, it is because of her great capacity to undertake almost any endeavor and to see it

through with determination, imagination, and gusto and because of her long service to her

adopted community that she was selected as the recipient of the 1982 Burke County Woman of the Year award presented by the Morganton Business and Professional Women's Club."

Additionally, Orael Hairfield found the time to work with the Burke County Chamber of Commerce, serving in the role of vice president and having served as chairman of the Membership Committee, for which she was credited with bringing a record number of new members into the organization. On a number of Election Days, she served as a local precinct judge, helping voters.

She worked tirelessly as a board member and chairman of the Commercial Supplies and

Services Division for the United Way. For 12 years with the Girl Scouts, she served as troop leader, troop consultant, and Neighborhood Cookie Co-Chairman. She was also, president of the Nouveau Extension Homemakers Club, Board Member of Burke United Christian

Ministries, and member of the Burke Agricultural Extension Services Advisory Board, Hospice volunteer, board member, and chairman of their fundraising campaign. She volunteered for 20 years at Grace Hospital with the Pink Ladies, helping out in the hospital gift shop and as a buyer for the gift shop.

She taught Sunday School classes at St. Charles, served as a lector at Mass, and served as

chairman of the church Finance council, the Parish Council, and the Ladies Guild. She

somehow also found time to help teach English to the Yia Thao Hmong family for two years.

Her boundless energy extended to several home activities needlework, swimming, and working in the yard with Joe. She enjoyed a reputation as an excellent cook due to her baking, creative cooking for church events, and hosting friends at small dinner parties at home.

Reading her obituary, her son's eyes teared up and he said, "It's no wonder she lived to 97

because it took her that long to slow down." His sisters, who so knew his remark was spot on, both laughed and nodded.

She summed up her life philosophy with this quote:

"Women can contribute to their communities by being true to themselves as women. Feeling good about who you are as a person makes it easy to contribute in any and all ways to your community. Each woman has different talents and abilities, so it is up to each of us to 'go' with what we have been given or have developed ... but again, the sky's the limit. It's up to us."

Orael is preceded in death by her parents, Harry Ahrens and Florence Previdi Ahrens, her

brother Harry, Jr., her husband Joseph B. Hairfield, and her eldest son Robert Hairfield. She is survived by her daughters Jodie Dougher, Leslie Hairfield, her son Steve Hairfield, her three grandchildren Anna Hairfield, and Matthew and Jay Dougher, seven great-grandchildren, and a great-great-grandchild. Her extended family includes a number of nieces and nephews.

The family appreciates flowers, or memorial gifts may be made to St. Charles

Catholic Church.

A Requiem Mass will be held for Orael noon, Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at St. Charles. The family will receive friends Monday evening, August 22, 2022 at Sossoman Funeral Home from 5:30 - 7 pm.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Orael was a dear friend to our family for all the years we were in Morganton. As my mother grew more feeble, Orael came often just to sit with her. I will always remember her as the definition of classy.

—Dawn E Neatherly