



## Ruth Yvonne Hopewell

August 13, 1929 - March 20, 2016

### RUTH CECIL HOPEWELL

Ruth Yvonne Cecil Hopewell, age 86, passed away in Newnan, Georgia, on March 20, 2016. Born in the small community of Quicksand, Kentucky, to William Penn and Nettie Ruth Haddix Cecil, she touched the lives of many and left her mark all over the world. Ruth persevered to live an abundant life of significance.

She loved her family and enjoyed planning special experiences to bring them together, including family journeys to England, Ireland, Alaska and Hawaii. Her family is forever grateful for the influence of her creative spirit and zest for life. She is survived by her children James William Hopewell (Terry), Paul Cecil Hopewell, and Anne Ruth Hopewell Graner (Lou); her grandchildren Amber Hopewell Kerr (Chris), David William Hopewell (Heidi), Jessica Anne Graner, and Lindsay Margaret Graner; her great-grandchildren Addison Christine Kerr, Graham Luke Kerr, and Phoenix David Hopewell; and her remarkable caregiver Jennifer Allen. Ruth, a woman of resilience and strength, was preceded in death by her father, mother, and husbands James "Jim" Franklin Hopewell, Allen Harra, John Schmitz, and William "Bill" Ferzacca.

With visions of helping others improve their lives through education, Ruth

received degrees from the University of Cincinnati, Columbia University, and the University of London, England. As a young missionary, she and her late husband, Jim Hopewell, moved to Liberia, Africa, where she taught in a one-room schoolhouse and supervised student teachers. Ruth also enthralled students as a talented, skilled teacher and school administrator in Cincinnati, Ohio; Newton, Massachusetts; New City, New York; Cumming, Georgia; and Decatur, Georgia; and as an assistant professor in New Britain, Connecticut. Chosen as the first female principal in the Forsyth County School System, she solidified her journey as a pioneer in education.

Her vivacious spirit was also seen on stage as a community theatre actress and director in Cumming, GA; Newnan, GA; and St. Simons, GA. Directing "12 Angry Men," Ruth and her cast won the 'Ensemble Acting' award at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in 1993. In later years, she and late husband Bill Ferzacca, created the StorySpinners and were beloved storytellers for children in Lexington, Kentucky. They were awarded United Way's 'Volunteer-of-the-Year' for Central Kentucky in 2006 (family category) for their storytelling.

Wherever Ruth lived, she impacted her community and her church. Her volunteer interests varied from hospital and hospice settings to schools, theatre, and global outreach. In her 70s, she played percussion instruments for the New Horizons Senior Band after a lifelong love of music and singing. Desiring to learn about new cultures, Ruth traveled to diverse countries throughout her life. Her spirit has now traveled to her Creator and inspires those who loved her.

Condolences may be expressed to the family online at [www.mckoon.com](http://www.mckoon.com).

A 'Celebration of Life' memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 26, 2016, 3:00 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Newnan, Georgia. Visitation

will occur prior to the service, 2:00 – 2:45 pm, and a reception will be held after the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Coweta Samaritan Clinic, P.O. Box 963, Newnan, GA 30264, to help provide quality medical and dental care to the uninsured.

McKoon Funeral Home 38 Jackson St Newnan GA 30263 770-253-4580

# Cemetery Details

## McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street  
Newnan, GA 30263  
(770) 253-4580  
care@mckoon.com  
<http://www.mckoon.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 26. 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
576 Roscoe Road  
Newnan, GA 30263

## Service

MAR 26. 3:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
576 Roscoe Road  
Newnan, GA 30263

# Tribute Wall

PK

“ *May God bless you all and may Ruth's memory be eternal. What can I say? So much of my childhood was spent with your family in Cumming...all the holidays and birthdays, the church...so much. Too many good memories to list just one. She will be missed...what a great woman! I love you all!*

*Cousin Philip Kontos  
Jupiter, FL*

---

**Philip Kontos** - March 24, 2016 at 11:55 PM

CC

“ *I've never met anyone who enjoyed life more than Ruth Hopewell. Her enthusiastic, genuine love for others was present in everything she did. As a teacher, I wanted to emulate her free spirit and her love of all things excellent. She set high standards for her students and her teachers; those under her care wanted to reach those standards out of respect and love for her .*

*After a leave of absence to start my family, I returned to Forsyth County, where Ruth was principal at an elementary school. At the first county meeting, the superintendent read the names of new teachers, including returning educators. As my name was called, Ruth popped up in the crowd, found me standing in the back of the room, and gave me a huge smile with a face full of joy. I thought to myself, "Oh, she's glad I'm here!" What a blessing that was to me. Indeed, she was a blessing during all the years I taught in Forsyth County.*

*The essence of her amazing life continues in the life of her daughter Anne. I am blessed to know and love both of those lovely, inspiring Hopewell women.*

*Carolyn Dean Compton  
Canton, GA*

---

**Carolyn Compton** - March 24, 2016 at 11:47 AM

JD

“ Anne and Lou, Don and I are so sorry for your loss. Your mother looks a lot like you, Anne. She must have been a lovely person to have raised such a wonderful daughter.

---

**Joan Doggrell** - March 23, 2016 at 09:17 PM

CT

“ Anne, you and your family are in our prayers. We are so very sorry for your loss. Much love, Cindy & Trip Taylor

---

**Cindy Taylor** - March 23, 2016 at 10:55 AM