

Memorial Tribute to *Irene Rose Owen*

December 1, 2021

Presented by Dee Ferguson

As both ministers said at Irene's Witness to The Resurrection, "we shouldn't be here today". But we are. Irene is the reason I am here today for she was my proposer for the Garden Club many years ago. Though we were friends for 50 years, our common love of gardening is probably what brought us closest together. We laughed our way through many outings to garden centers, nurseries, private gardens...and perhaps, most notably, a memorable GCA trip to New York City and the Hudson River Valley where, in addition to seeing beautiful homes and gardens, we stayed in a hotel that lost its water supply (no working toilets, no brushing teeth or washing faces) and then the next day a tornado went through the historic grounds we were visiting and toppled trees which blocked our bus from leaving. No matter the circumstances, Irene was always FUN...and she was FUNNY! Her dry wit could put you in stitches...especially when accompanied by that mischievous twinkle in her eyes and that Southern drawl. That drawl was never more evident than when she would look at Duncan and say, "now Sugah!". She was born in North Carolina and died in North Carolina and loved everything TarHeel.

Irene was the consummate Southern lady. When she entertained her table was perfect...ironed linens, polished silver, delicious food, and beautiful flowers. Usually, the flowers were from her own beautiful garden. Roses were her specialty, and we saw many of them in our horticulture exhibits. But she had many other lovely plantings in her yard. I will never forget one luncheon when she presented a large bowl of lemon pudding and plunked a large, gorgeous, freshly picked peony in the middle. I held my breath expecting ants to appear all over the pudding. But there was not one! It was all perfect...and perfectly beautiful!

In addition to her wit, charm, and that wonderful drawl, Irene will always be remembered for her great faith and her friendliness to all. In the garden club was a mentor to many, a member of the Daffodil Club and received the Charlotte Taylor Massie Membership award-for unselfish contributions to the Club and for generosity in sharing her time and talents to help further the goals of the Club.

Last week, Thanksgiving week, I was reading a forwarded email which had numerous quotes about thankfulness and gratitude and one resonated with me as being the perfect tribute to Irene. Ironically, the exact same quote was at the beginning of the Thanksgiving message we all received from GCA. It says, "Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy. They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." (Marcel Proust). If there was ever a charming gardener, it was Irene. She was charming in every way and all our souls blossomed in her presence.

Irene Rose Owen's Positions with Tuckahoe Garden Club and GCV

Member 1990-2021

- GCV Rose Committee
- GCV Test Collection-Rose
- Gifts
- HGW GCV
- HGW TGC Assignments 2006-07
- Historian
- Hospitality
- Membership/New Members
- Nominating Committee
- Programs
- Programs Chair
- TGC Second Vice President

Irene Rose Owen's Awards

- The Charlotte Taylor Massie Membership Award-2013