



Clara Jane Smith

August 18, 1927 - February 23, 2017

Clara Jane Smith, 89, died on Thursday, February 23, 2017. Clara Jane was born in Tallahassee in 1927 to Fred and Clara Carroll. She graduated from Leon High School in 1945 and in 1947 married Bill Smith, her beloved husband of 68 years. She attended Florida State College for Women and later transferred to the University of Florida, where she was one of the first female graduates and graduated with Honors.

Clara Jane was an avid gardener and often referred to as a local gardening legend. She was a landscape designer for Tallahassee Nurseries and later owned her own landscape business. Her plantings and gardens grace lawns and public spaces throughout Tallahassee, and Clara Jane's community involvement reflected her love for gardening and agriculture. She was the President of the Florida Grape Growers Association, Chairman of the Board of Goodwood Plantation and a member of the Southern Garden History Society. A strong civic commitment to Tallahassee shaped Clara Jane's life. She was actively involved with the Girl Scouts of America and received the Women of Distinction Award in 2010. She was also a troop leader at Faith Presbyterian Church and was instrumental in building the Girl Scout Camp for All Seasons. Clara Jane was an Elder at Faith Presbyterian Church, and she and Bill delivered meals on wheels for many years.

Clara Jane was predeceased by her husband, William Curtis Smith, and her brother, Fred Carroll. She is survived by her son, Robert Mills Smith of Tallahassee, her daughters, Carroll Smith Rodriguez (Patrick), of St. Louis,

Missouri, and Polly Smith Kleissas, (Constantine) of Wye Mills, Maryland, and her grandchildren, Polly and Patricia Rodriguez and John William Kleissas. Clara Jane lived life to its fullest; at age 88, she was still working as a landscape designer. Through her 80s she traveled the world, played tennis twice a week and enjoyed her book and wine clubs. The people she loved, the gardens she created, and the lives she touched continue to serve as a testament to a life well lived.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle , 250 Pinewood Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32303, <http://www.gscfp.org/en/support/SU.html> or Faith Presbyterian Church, 2200 N. Meridian Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303, <http://www.faihtpcusa.org/>

A memorial service will be held at 10:00 AM on Monday, February 27, 2017 at Faith Presbyterian Church with a reception for family and friends following at the family residence.

Rocky Bevis and Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193, www.bevisfh.com) are assisting the Smith family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 27. 10:00 AM (ET)

Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Tribute Wall



“ Clara Jane told me, "we conquer by continuing." I have it written on my calendar and I think of her every morning.

TRILLA PANDO - February 21, 2025 at 11:26 AM