



## Gay Nelle Howard

December 7, 1935 - February 3, 2024

After a wonderful life of 88 years, Gay Nelle Tucker Howard finished her life in Tallahassee, Florida. She was born December 7, 1935, during the Great Depression in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to Gayle Fritz Tucker and Lecil Lewis Tucker. Gay was educated at Northport Elementary and Tuscaloosa Junior High and Senior High schools. She graduated from the University of Alabama in 1963 with a Master's degree in Elementary Education, Educational Supervision, and School Administration. She continued her education after retirement starting in 2000 through OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Florida State University) for 20 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Gayle Fritz Tucker and Lecil Lewis Tucker, and brothers Michael and Charles Tucker. She leaves behind her wonderful husband Jim, and her life will continue through the lives of her daughter, Diane Estes Maisel, Green Mountain, North Carolina, her granddaughters Hannah and Annie Maisel, and their future generations. Her memory will be carried through her extended Howard family: sons Greg Howard (wife, Roseann)

and Brad Howard, and grandchildren, Griff Howard (wife, Jessica), Jordan Howard Portal (husband, Yordanys (Yoyo)), Shaelyn Howard, Nick Cifarelli, and four great-grandchildren: Landon and Tristan Howard and Everly and Braxton Portal. She leaves behind sister, Carolyn Woodley (son, Matthew and his wife Lindsay), and many other relatives and great friends.

Gay was a teacher at Skyland and Verner Elementary and was principal at University Place Elementary School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She helped to write, implement, and train teachers nationwide in the nationally certified PEGASUS Individualized Continuous Progress Reading Program, and helped school system teachers to transition from segregated to integrated schools in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She was President of the Tuscaloosa Professional Teachers Association and Alabama Principals Association and was named State Administrator of the Year by the Alabama School Administrators Association. She also worked in Educational Leadership at the State Department of Education in Montgomery, Alabama, where she assisted in developing a statewide teacher evaluation system, and the Florida Department of Education in Tallahassee, Florida. She loved all aspects of work in education: teaching, supervising teachers and student teachers, training school leaders at all levels, consulting and making presentations at local, state, national, and international levels.

Gay loved to travel, attend classes through (OLLI) Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at FSU

(where she served as President), reading, theater, music, collecting pottery in NC, and

gardening. But what she loved most was being called “Babe”, “Mom”, “Gran”, and “Gamma

Gay”. She really loved living part-time in Tallahassee and on St. George Island, Florida, and

Green Mountain, North Carolina, and traveling all over the United States and

the world with Jim.

Some of her favorite places were visiting 90% of the National Parks in the U.S., walking the Great Wall of China, exploring the Vatican and Colosseum in Italy, roaming through Catherine's Palace and the Hermitage Museum in Russia, hiking Machu Picchu in Peru, dancing the tango in Argentina, touring Greece and its islands, visiting Maisel Synagogue in Prague, going to Auschwitz and the salt mines in Poland, wandering Ireland, Scotland, and the UK, home to most of her ancestors, seeing the Louvre Museum, Eiffel Tower, and Versailles in France, marveling at the aqueducts in Spain, bussing through Australia, standing in awe at the Grand Canyon, exploring the Nile River and pyramids in Egypt, glacier hiking in Alaska, working in and adventuring in Washington, DC, and lodging on top of a volcano in Hawaii. She thought her life was heaven on earth!

Her mantras, learned from her Dad were, "If you think you can, you can, and if you think you can't, you can't", "Science and skill shall overcome ignorance and superstition", "Knock and it shall be opened unto you", and "Seek and you shall find." She believed that if you live and educate your kids you have given them everything they need to succeed in life. The rest is up to them.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at FSU, PBS, or the US National Parks.

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

DH

“ OLLI at FSU will always be grateful for Gay's kind, gentle and loving spirit. She was OLLI's 13th president from 2006-2007 when OLLI, then known as The Academy at FSU, was in its 15th year. As president, Gay continued to help grow the organization. It flourished to more than 150 members. Thank you Gay Howard. You will be missed!

---

**Debra Herman** - March 13, 2024 at 02:13 PM