

Distinguished Teacher Passes Away

Jeanette F. Ridgway, Ph.D. 1939 – 2020



1971, Niagara Falls, Photo by Sam Ridgway

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Born in the wooded area south of Richards, Texas, Jeanette excelled in school and became an active member of Richards Baptist Church. She graduated from Richards High School in 1956 and matriculated to Baylor University. She sang in the Baylor Religious hour choir that performed at many venues in Texas and the south. Jeanette earned a BA at the end of 1959. Answering an add, she took the train to Pearsall, Texas in the dusty ranch land 60 miles south of San Antonio. The job had opened up because a teacher had been fired. The fired teacher had refused to teach a black student who had been moved into the classroom. Jeanette loved

teaching English in that classroom with its Hispanic, African American and Anglo students. She taught only one semester in Pearsall. There she met her husband, Sam Ridgway who was to graduate in veterinary medicine from Texas A&M University in a few months. Jeanette and Sam married that summer of 1960 just before Sam was ordered for Air Force service in California. During 10 years in Camarillo, California, where Sam worked at Oxnard AFB, and at Point Mugu Navy Base, Jeanette taught in public schools. She served as pianist and was instrumental in founding the first Southern Baptist Church in Camarillo which is now the First Baptist Church of Camarillo on Temple Avenue. Jeanette was a gifted a hostess who bathed her guests in warmth and joy. In 1970, Sam received a fellowship at Cambridge University in England. The couple moved there and Jeanette gloried in all the campus life of the English University. They transferred to San Diego, CA in 1972 where Jeanette earned her MA in literature from San Diego State University. She then commuted to earn a Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles. Later she taught graduate and undergraduate literature at San Diego State University. Always a scholar, Jeanette loved teaching at all levels. She was married to Dr. Sam H. Ridgway for almost 60 years.

Jeanette is survived by her husband of San Diego, California, her brothers Dan Fuller and Bevin Fuller of Richards, Texas, her sisters Mary Ann Rogers of Wooster, Ohio, Donna Trivilino of Kingwood, Texas and Cheryl Lane of College Station, Texas.