

Clarice Drexler

1933-2025

One of our founding members, **Clarice Drexler**, aged 92, passed away on August 4th. She maintained her membership even when she moved away to live with her daughter. She enjoyed hearing our newsletter read to her every month. Clarice, Aurie Bremer, and Jerry Buchanan started WOW as an offshoot of Welcome Wagon. She served multiple terms as President, as well as other Board positions. In addition to organizing the Bazaar, she worked closely with The Russell Home, and many other charities to make WOW a true civic organization. She was a true ambassador for WOW by encouraging membership growth so that we could be active in giving to our community. A few of our longtime members shared the following:

“The day after attending my first WOW meeting, I received a call from Clarice. I loved her sweet Southern voice and felt an instant connection. She told me more about the club and ways I could become involved (which I did). Then we talked at length about the many things we had in common since we were both Southerners with many connections to Georgia. We became very close friends and remained close until the end. I was blessed to be with her just a couple of days before her passing. I talked to her about the loved ones she’d soon see and the many friends from WOW who’d gone on before her. I’m so thankful to WOW for introducing me to this funny, caring woman who became so dear to me and so many others. She was truly a special lady!” **Nancy May**

“I have tons of great memories about Clarice; she was a pistol. Great fun and so very caring!” **Noel McGuigan.**

“Clarice was one of the first ladies I met in 1994 when I joined WOW. I felt a little out of place, but Clarice welcomed me and got me very much involved, making me feel very comfortable. Over the years we worked together, and she was a joy to be with, always upbeat and smiling. Always looking fashionable. Just a lovely human being. “ **Louella Palermo**

“I joined WOW in 2001 or 2002 when Karen Bogart was President. I always remember Clarice for her smile, her sense of humor and dedication to WOW in every way. She loved welcoming new members and encouraged involvement in events and charity drives which makes West Orange Women such a great group and builds friendships that are so rewarding. She will always be remembered.” **Suzanne Bender**

Born at home in Tifton, Georgia on June 16, 1933, to Gretchen Fuller Cox and Franklin Lloyd Cox, Clarice grew up in a world that she would proceed to fill with color, creativity, strong opinions, and a deep devotion to her family, faith, and country.

She was predeceased by her beloved parents; her husband, Henry Bennet Drexler; her brother, Robert “Bob” Cox, and Safeway (cat); and a whole host of friends and family who surely greeted her at the pearly gates with open arms. She is survived by her children Zeke Williams (Darcie), Liz Lowe (Kelly), and stepdaughter Lisa Tracey and many grandchildren.

Clarice was equal parts Southern belle and spitfire, a proud patriot with a deep love for her country. She was never shy with her voice, especially when it came to freedom flights, immigration reform (ask Marco Rubio), or making sure you voted in every election, preferably

the right way. She brought that same passion to service, volunteering with everything from the Women's Republican Club of Orlando to her college sorority, Mimi's Kids in East Africa, REALM, and the West Orange Women's League.

She had hands that could craft anything, from delicate dresses and toys to fine oil paintings and copperwork and a voice that could fill a sanctuary on Sunday mornings. As a dedicated member of the Methodist church, she raised her children in the heart of the congregation.

A true globe-trotter, Clarice's answer to any travel proposal was always "When are we leaving?" She visited every continent but Antarctica (and honestly, she only skipped that one because it lacked decent shopping). One of Clarice's favorite nicknames was "Bibi," the Swahili word for "grandmother," which she lovingly earned while visiting Tanzania on her 86th trip around the sun; she fondly reminisced often on this trip with her friend Michelle (Mimi) and her son, James Mwakyonde. She adored opera, live theatre, a good movie, and homemade meals from her friends, Katrina and Linda.

She loved God, her family, a good book, anything with sugar, frogs, her passport, wind chimes, a glass of Pinot Gris, Steve Harvey, and the sound of laughter. She believed in giving: her time, her talents, her resources, and she did so with unending generosity and joy. She loved a scoop of ice cream, especially with her dear friend Bruce and homemade cookies with Sheila.

In her honor, the family asks that donations be made to either of her two favorite causes: Mimi's Kids and the Flagler County Drug Court Foundation — two places where her legacy of love, strength, and second chances will live on.

Clarice Drexler leaves behind a family who adored her, friends who cherished her, and a world that is better, and far more interesting, for having had her in it. We love you a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck, Clarice.