



Grace Kemp Harris

December 1, 1925 - January 18, 2016

Grace Kemp Harris, age 90, of Fort Collins passed away on the morning of January 18th, 2016 of natural causes. In the days before her death Grace was surrounded by family and friends, and had joyfully celebrated a belated 90th birthday party including all her children and grandchildren.

During her 18 years in Fort Collins, Grace was an active volunteer and organizer, particularly through the First United Methodist Church in Fort Collins and in the mission activities of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church. Through the Conference, she was a co-organizer and participant in trips to Angola to support rebuilding of church activities in that country after almost 30 years of civil war ended in 2002. Her mission interests grew out of her own background, having spent her early years in Angola as the daughter of Methodist missionaries. Her volunteer activities were wide-ranging and included action on affordable housing, voter education, peace advocacy, and economic development in underserved communities, including work at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Grace had a strong sense of civic duty, a generous spirit, and profound regard for the value of all human life. All who knew her were witness to her indefatigable cheerfulness.

Grace was born on December 1, 1925, in Angola, Africa, where her parents, Alexander and Winifred Kemp, were serving as missionaries of the Methodist

church and where her father, a doctor, had founded a medical center. Grace remembered her time in Africa fondly, with stories of watching her father treat illnesses and perform surgeries and of strikingly beautiful Angolan geography such as the Pungo Andongo Rocks and Kalandula Falls. Grace was the second of four girls, all born in Angola: Winifred (Winnie) was the eldest, and Lois Anne (Sanne) and Martha (Marty) were younger.

In her pre-teen years, Grace's family brought her to the United States. Grace stayed with an aunt and uncle in Montclair, NJ while her parents and younger sisters returned to Angola for a second tour of missionary work. Her cousin, Adelle Dean Buck, still a resident of Montclair, became a good friend whom she considered a fourth sister. Grace attended middle school in Montclair and high school at Northfield School for Girls in Massachusetts.

Grace received a BA degree at Swarthmore College and an MA degree in biology at Wesleyan University. She worked for a time in developmental biology research at Princeton University and then in a lab at Harvard Medical School. While in the Boston area she met Dwight Lowe Harris, who was finishing his Sc.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Grace and Dwight were married on September 13, 1952, in Chautauqua, NY, where Grace's parents had settled after nearly 30 years of missionary activity.

For the next 33 years, Grace and Dwight followed Dwight's jobs in mining engineering and metallurgy across the country, starting with a teaching position at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, on to mining locations in Montana (Nye and Columbus), to California (Trona and Altadena), Pennsylvania (Yardley) and finally back to California (Westlake Village). When Dwight retired in 1985, they moved to the woods of Clayton, Washington, to be near Dwight's boyhood home and family members.

Grace and Dwight raised three sons and one daughter. Grace also continued

her education in new areas with programs in childhood education and nutrition, and she worked for the Head Start program in Ventura County, California for several years.

Grace and Dwight moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, in 1997, after Dwight's failing health made rustic living impractical, so that they could be near their son, Rodney Harris, and his wife, Jane Slusarski-Harris.

Everywhere they lived, Grace and Dwight were active in the local Methodist church and community. For Grace, this meant mission work and outreach projects, continually making local and global connections. In Yardley, she helped form the cooperative Scammells Corner preschool. In California, she started an annual Crop Walk fundraising event. In Spokane, she started a Habitat for Humanity chapter and received a Volunteer of the Year award from the city. While in Fort Collins, she renewed ties to her roots in Angola. She returned twice to the compound that her father had built and gathered donations through the church and H.E.L.P. International with the hope and plan of rebuilding after the country's long civil war.

Grace and Dwight both had a love of the arts, especially music and dance.

Grace recently endowed the Grace and Dwight Harris Dance Scholarship at Colorado State University.

Throughout their lives Grace and Dwight were also active outdoors people, and hiking and camping trips were ever present in Harris family life. Grace enjoyed taking in the beauty of natural surroundings, and enhancing indoor and outdoor spaces with flowers and trees.

Grace was preceded in death by her husband, Dwight Harris, one son, Craig Everett Harris, and two sisters, Winifred Husted and Lois Anne Kemp.

Grace is survived by one sister, Martha McKnight (Theodore McKnight); three of her children, Alexander Harris (Annemarie Drummey), Rodney Harris (Jane Slusarski-Harris), and Donna Harris (ex son-in-law, Donald Hagberg); her grandchildren, Kendall Harris, Evan Harris, and Anna Hagberg; as well as 10 nephews and nieces and their families.

A memorial service will be held Friday, January 22, 2016, at 2:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church of Fort Collins.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in memorium to the United Methodist Church Global Ministries (<http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/How-to-Give>) or the Grace and Dwight Harris Dance Scholarship at Colorado State University. (Tonya Malik-Carson, Assistant Director of Development, 970-491-3558 or Tonya.Malik-Carson@colostate.edu)

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN **22**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (MT)

First United Methodist Church
1005 Stover Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524
<http://www.fcfumc.net/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Grace Kemp Harris*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM

DF

“ *Donna and all of the Harris Family:*

My parents Bob and Donna Furleigh told me their Christmas newsletter had come back return to sender from Grace and they had feared something was amiss, and tonight I happened to find this site - I am very saddened by your loss of Grace, and your family are in my thoughts.

I started gathering photos and history for all the Harris family about a year ago, as part of trying to put a face with every person in the my family tree. Will and Bess Harris and their descendants (you folks!) I had so far been unable to find. I had hoped to get a chance to speak with Grace and the rest of the family about the history and memories of the visits to Clear Lake and seeing my grandparents Robert and Maude (Harris) Furleigh, and learning more about where we all came from.

At some point, if you might consider getting in touch, I would love to catch up and share memories and photos between us on the Harris family which I can help keep the memories and history alive.

Attached is the only photo I have of your family

Again, my condolences on your loss, Donna.

Dwight Furleigh

Tonica, IL

nightowl1962@hotmail.com



Dwight Furleigh - February 28, 2016 at 10:16 PM

Donna
Harris

“ 6 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Donna Harris - January 27, 2016 at 10:40 AM

Donna
Harris

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Donna Harris - January 27, 2016 at 10:37 AM

BS

“ *Donna and Harris Family,
I learned to know you and your parents during their time at
Westlake Methodist, CA.
We lived on Brentford Ave. and you were there on the corner as we
turned left onto Westlake Blvd. Your parents were friendly, gracious,
and spiritual people, for different reasons I had the privilege in their
later years here of taking them to or from church.
Missions was their interest and being a "Missionary Kid," I latched
on to that.
But their quiet voices and ready smiles is also what I will remember
about them.*

Love and Prayers, Betty Stemen

Betty Stemen - January 25, 2016 at 04:26 PM


Donna
Harris

Thanks for your message, Betty. I remember.

Donna Harris - January 27, 2016 at 08:09 AM

EM

“ Dear family of Grace Kemp Harris:

Grace and I were apartment mates many years ago (60 or so) in Cambridge, MA before she met Dwight and they went off to get married, travel to the West Coast, and then Wisconsin, where I visited them at least once. Since then it has been irregular, but always there were long newsy Christmas letters. I feel as though I know each of you, even though I believe I have never met any of you.

Yesterday, as I was trying to chase down the reasons for my letters being returned by the PO, I encountered Grace's death notice. It was really serendipitous, as it was 4 o'clock in the afternoon here in Virginia--the time that the Memorial Service was starting in Colorado. So I was able to grieve with you--as I continue to do. My deepest sympathy goes to each of you. You were so fortunate to have had such a wonderful mother.

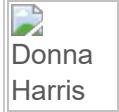
My memories of her are so extensive that I do not know where to start, plus some memories of Dwight, but it was such a short time after they met that Grace decided to go to Wisconsin with him. She (I was two months older than she) and I were competing to save money to get cars. She "won", however, as Dwight had a car, among other important attributes. She spent her savings on a "trousseau" if that is what was needed for a camping trip across country!

And there was a weekend spree to Nantucket, where anything that could go wrong did--planes not flying, beach picnic after the theatre not found in the fog, almost missing the train back. etc., etc.

I feel so fortunate to have known her.

*Fondly,
Ellie May*

Ellie May - January 23, 2016 at 06:59 PM



Donna
Harris

Such wonderful memories to hear about ... Thank you for posting, and glad you could share in the moment of the memorial service. I didn't know about saving for a car! She remembered and shared stories with me about Nantucket in recent years, and the times sharing an apartment before she met Dwight. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 09:22 AM

BR

“ *I had the privilege of returning to Angola on two mission trips, in 2003, with Grace. Ironically, I had also been a missionary 'kid' in Angola, and my family lived in the original Kemp home. Grace was such an outgoing and caring person. On our trips she spent a lot of time working with the children in crafts. Grace attended several reunions of former Angola missionaries and their offspring. It was always such a pleasure to visit with her. She was truly a great lady.*

Barbara Schaad Rogers

Barbara Schaad Rogers - January 23, 2016 at 05:56 PM



Donna
Harris

I remember Mom preparing for those crafts before her trips, not sure what to take, not sure what would already be on hand, but completely sure she wanted something to do with the kids. I would love to hear more about living in the original Kemp home, if you would like to share or keep in touch. Thanks for your post. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 09:13 AM

LV

“ Grace was married to our mother Ruth's brother Dwight, and she was a very special aunt. Both Grace and Dwight seemed to have an endless capacity for giving, for optimism, and for reliance upon their remarkable intellects. She wanted a group of people spread across the country to know themselves as a family, despite the miles that separated us. Our families lived far apart for most of the years that the cousins were growing up, and so we remember with deep appreciation the many letters, cards, and travel accounts that Grace sent to us. We thank her for tirelessly sharing her love and affection and wonderful spirit, and we remain in awe of the strength of Grace's faith.

Robert G. Boes, Jr. and Linda Harris (Boes) Voigt

Linda H. Voigt - January 22, 2016 at 06:59 PM



What a great description of how Mom kept us connected and identified as a family. That is absolutely what she did, with that wonderful spirit you mention. Thank you. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 09:08 AM

DF

*Linda, Donna, Robert - These memories of Grace and Dwight are wonderful to read, and a fitting tribute to Grace and all the fine things that I never knew she did, but learned of while reading her story. I would like to get in touch with all of you to see if you might be interested to help me on some work I am doing putting together the Harris Family Tree. My grandmother, Maude Harris was your grandfather, Will Harris' sister, and I would love to chat with you and yours about family history and historical photos we could exchange together. How can i get in touch with you all? Best Regards, Dwight Furleigh
Tonica, IL*

nightowl1962@hotmail.com

Dwight Furleigh - February 28, 2016 at 11:06 PM

JO

“ Grace was a much-appreciated, inspiring member of the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church for 8 years while I chaired the Board. She was always infectiously positive and had a fantastic ability to organize mission projects, recruit and encourage volunteers. Her love of Angola never lessened, and the Board enjoyed reports of her trip with the Angola Advocates of Colorado.
My life was enriched by having known Grace. Rest in peace, beautiful friend.
Rev. Judy Owsley



Judy Owsley - January 21, 2016 at 07:55 PM



Donna
Harris

Thank you for these memories and comments. "Infectiously positive" is a great description. I'm glad to see you connected here. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 09:03 AM

RB

“ Our condolences to the Harris Family. Grace was so appropriately named. In her actions, love for others and beauty of God's reflection. All our Love.

Randie, Cindi and Adam Bell - January 21, 2016 at 07:26 PM



Donna
Harris

Thank you for your comment. Her name does seem appropriate, and is part of a lineage ... her grandmother was Grace, and her granddaughter is Anna Grace ("double Grace").

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:58 AM

JD

“ Dale and I and our young Labrador Retriever were lovingly welcomed as we parked our motor home in front of a Grace's condominium in Ft. Collins. We had homemade yogurt and freshly baked bread followed by a sharing of years of activities spent together at Westlake United Methodist Church in CA. Grace then took us to visit Rod and Jane where we were given Iris bulbs which still bloom each year near our front door. They will now remind me of Grace's beautiful spirit.

Joanie and Dale Donalson

joan and Dale Donalson - January 21, 2016 at 01:11 PM



Donna
Harris

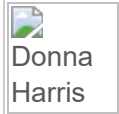
Oh, the homemade bread! That was a "signature" offering of Mom's. I'm so glad she was able to see you on your visits to Colorado, and that I was able to join you. Thank you. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:54 AM

BP

“ We had the opportunity to hear a mission presentation by someone from an organization in Nicaragua (CEPAD) when he was visiting a neighboring church here in western PA. I'm pretty sure it was Aunt Grace that was planning to join Aunt Sanne when she was heading that way in the next few weeks (although it could have been Aunt Marty -- it was about 25 years ago, and my memory is a bit hazy on the details). We knew that Sanne had connections with the same organization, so we introduced ourselves after the presentation. Imagine their surprise when they met with their contacts in Nicaragua and got greetings from their niece and her family in Pennsylvania!

Becky Patterson - January 21, 2016 at 11:16 AM



Donna Harris

I'm sure she loved that connection, Becky! Thanks for sharing the story. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:51 AM



“ Marv And Marilyn Heller lit a candle in memory of Grace Kemp Harris



Marv and Marilyn Heller - January 21, 2016 at 10:52 AM



Her smile was an inspiration to us. She made a difference in the world!

Marv

Marv and Marilyn Heller - January 21, 2016 at 10:54 AM



“ Grace started the League of Women Voters' Affordable Housing Team, and was inspirational to us. We are trying to carry on her work.

Marv

Marv and Marilyn Heller - January 21, 2016 at 10:50 AM



Donna Harris

Thank you for posting. The League as an organization and affordable housing as a cause were both important to Mom, as were the people who worked with her. Best wishes for carrying on. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:49 AM

CB

“ With such a heavy heart I will say farewell to my dear friend & mentor, Grace. I was with Grace at Interfaith Council and Women for Peace & Justice. Her gentle smile & heart led her quiet yet profound actions for peace & justice where she saw challenges. She was uplifting to everyone. We will miss her at our Women for Peace lunches. I will donate in her honor to The Geller Center that she was very fond of. Such an incredible person. We who knew her were all enriched.

Cheryl Beckett

Cheryl Beckett - January 21, 2016 at 09:34 AM



Donna
Harris

Glad to have made this connection, Cheryl. Mom often mentioned her Women for Peace group. Thank you for posting, and for the donation in her honor and memory. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:46 AM

TM

“ We remember several wonderful summer camping trips shared with Grace and Dwight, and her sisters; we visited many beautiful places in the northwest and even into Canada. Grace was always looking out for the comfort and welfare of the rest of us. A truly delightful person. Ted and Marty McKnight

Ted McKnight - January 20, 2016 at 05:14 PM



Donna
Harris

Thanks for those memories, Uncle Ted ... I wasn't on those trips, but I have heard many stories and seen many pictures. Sounds like Mom. -- Donna

Donna Harris - January 24, 2016 at 08:44 AM

CH

“ *Chrissy lit a candle in memory of Grace Kemp Harris*



Chrissy - January 20, 2016 at 01:38 PM