



Sara Lenora Neville Bennett Ph.D.

March 8, 1931 - September 10, 2020

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Dr. Sara Lenora Neville Bennett, a 6th generation Bulloch Countian, a descendant of John Neville who received 1000 acres in Bulloch County in 1790, was born on the family farm on March 8, 1931, to William Gesmon Neville and Marguerite Nunnally Neville. She was the fifth child and the last of the siblings born to this union. She died on September 10, 2020, as a result of COVID-19 contracted on that same family farmland, now site of The Lodge at Bethany, her home for the past four and one-half years.

Dr. Bennett was a 1948 honor graduate of Statesboro High School. As a student who oftentimes rode her Palomino Ledo to school, she was active in the band, the science club, the photography club, and the girls' basketball team. She enjoyed school and those interests throughout her life.

On July 11, 1948, she and Lovett Bennett of Sylvania, Georgia, eloped to Ridgeland, South Carolina, and married. Their marriage lasted two days short of 61 years when Lovett died on July 9, 2009. There were three children born to this union, six grandchildren, and eight greatgrandchildren. They made their home in Sylvania until 1966 when they moved to her family home after the death of her father.

As a non-traditional student with three young children and a very supportive husband, she entered Georgia Southern College in 1960. She received her B.S. in Biology with a minor in Mathematics and a B.S. Ed. in General Science in 1964 from Georgia Southern College. She received her M.S. Biology degree as one of the first two students in the program at Georgia Southern College, and was employed as an Instructor of Biology from 1966 to 1971. She continued her education at the University of Georgia, earning a Ph.D. in Microbiology in 1975. She was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1971, to Associate Professor in 1977, and to Professor in 1985. She retired May 31, 2004, and was named Professor Emerita.

Dr. Bennett belonged to several honor societies and was the recipient of numerous awards. She was a member of Alpha Gamma Omicron, The Society of Sigma Xi, and Golden Key Honor Society. She was selected as Advisor of the Year from Georgia Southern University and was selected the national winner of Outstanding Advisor Award

from the Southeast National Academic Advising Association region. She was an elected Fellow of the Georgia Academy of Science; recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Department of Biology; and, recipient of the Margaret Green Award for Excellence in Teaching, Southeastern Branch of the American Society for Microbiology. Memberships were held in the Georgia Academy of Science; Association of Southeastern Biologists; Genetics Society of America; American Society for Microbiology; Genetics Society of Georgia; Southeastern Immunologists; American Association for the Advancement of Science; and, the North American Research Society – Sigma Xi. She held several offices including appointment to the Board of Directors for the Genetics Society of Georgia; President of the Genetics Society of Georgia; President of the Georgia Academy of Science; and President for the Southeastern Branch of the American Society of Microbiology.

Dr. Bennett was a researcher and teacher, but her forté was mentoring graduate students. She was the major professor for many M.S. students and served as a member of other thesis committees. She excelled at directing the course work of the pre-medical and pre-dental students, successfully getting “her” students into the schools of their choice.

At her retirement, Dr. Steve Vives noted, “As educators we would like to think we pass along something about truth to students who use that information and pass it on and that our academic genealogy moves forever forward in time. As one stanza of a poem by an unknown author says, ‘Truth never dies. The ages come and go.

The mountains wear away, the stars retire.

Destruction lays earth’s mighty cities low;

And empires, states and dynasties expire;

But caught and handed onward by the wise,

Truth never dies.’”

Dr. Bennett was predeceased by her husband Lovett and her daughter Barbara Bennett Leopard, as well as by her parents and her siblings: William Gesmon Neville, Jr., Jessie Stafford Neville, Marguerite Nunnally Neville Guin, and William Josiah Neville. Ommie Mainer, her close friend and caregiver, preceded her in death by one day.

She is survived by her daughter, Sara Carolyn Bennett Broucek, and her husband, William Samuel Broucek, and her son, Lovett Bennett, Jr., and his wife Missy Mallard Bennett, all of Statesboro. The grandchildren: Samuel Josiah Broucek and his wife Michelle Shaw Broucek and William Bennett Broucek of Statesboro; Emily Leopard Baker and her husband Matthew Joseph Baker of Carmel, Indiana; Sara Leopard Saunders of Oxford, Ohio; William Lovett Bennett and his wife Megan Troutt Bennett of Brooklyn, New York; and, Michael Hampton Bennett of Atlanta, Georgia. The great-grandchildren: Josiah Charles Broucek and Emily Anne Broucek; Charles David Saunders, Thomas Lovett Saunders, and Lilah Victoria Badics; Bennett Elizabeth Baker and Evan James Baker; and

Lucy Ann Bennett. She is also survived by two sisters-in-law and three brothers-in-law, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Dr. Bennett was a member of the Statesboro Primitive Baptist Church where she was the longest serving member at the time of her death. A memorial service will be held there on Saturday, September 12, 2020, at 11:00 AM. Pews will be marked for appropriate social distancing relative to COVID directives. Masks will be available in the vestibule. Burial will be at Eastside Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that remembrances be made to the Sara Bennett Biology Scholarship (0595), Georgia Southern University Foundation, Inc., PO Box 8040, Statesboro, GA 30460 or Mercer Law School, 1021 Georgia Avenue, Macon, GA 31207.

Services will be streamed live at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/jafhlive/> or <http://www.statesboropbc.church>

Friends may sign the online register book at <http://www.joineranderson.com>.

Joiner-Anderson Funeral Home & Crematory of Statesboro is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery

Eastside Cemetery
Northside Drive
Statesboro, GA, 30458

Events

SEP 12 Memorial Service 11:00AM

Statesboro Primitive Baptist Church
4 S. Zetterower Ave., Statesboro, GA, US, 30458

Comments



“ Carolyn, I have been lifting you and your family up on prayer after learning of your mother's passing. Keep sharing those wonderful memories because her legacy lives on forever in the hearts of those that loved her. Sharon

Sharon Zeagler - September 17, 2020 at 11:42 AM



“ My condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Bennett. Dr. Bennett was my graduate advisor, and she was nothing short of wonderful! As I have gone through my career, I model how I treat students by what she did for me. I will never forget her kindness and smile. I always knew when she was coming down the hall in the old biology building because I could hear the rapid tap-tap of her shoes. She would come into the lab and say "whatcha got?". She was an inspiration for working moms and the primary reason I knew I could be a scientist with four children of my own. I tell my female students and postdocs all the things that Dr. Bennett did while raising her own family. She did it all and we owe it to her trailblazing spirit to try to fulfill our own goals too. She will be missed and I pray for comfort for all who knew her.

Charlene Jackson

Charlene Jackson - September 14, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ Lovett,
So sorry to hear about the loss of your Mama. My condolences to you, Missy and the family. Although I was never her student, we served together as Biology Dept faculty members and worked together with Dr. Oliver, and she was always very nice to me. She was really the only working Mom I was around and I admired her for trying to do it all. I hope happy memories soon replace the sadness of your loss. It is nice to know she is now healthy, happy, and with your Daddy again.
Deborah Entrekin Whitehair

Deborah Entrekin Whitehair - September 13, 2020 at 06:36 PM



“ Joy McCown lit a candle in memory of Sara Lenora Neville Bennett Ph.D.



Joy McCown - September 13, 2020 at 10:15 AM



“ Aunt Sara was such a sweet lady- I remember her with that sweet smile & always having kind words for you at each family gathering! And as the pastor said in the service this morning - she(they) was always late! We live in Valdosta & always beat Aunt Sara & Uncle Lovett to grandma's house in Sylvania!! I pray God surrounds each of you with his love, Grace & mercy during these difficult days ahead! Keep your warm & loving memories close at heart..... until you meet again! My love is with each of you! Terry

Terry Bennett McLane - September 12, 2020 at 12:32 PM



“ In loving memory of Sara. I am sending my heartfelt condolences. Sara was always a very kind and caring person to all. She will be greatly missed by everyone that knew her.

Sincerely,
Paul Lamar Tillman

Paul Lamar Tillman - September 12, 2020 at 10:36 AM



“ Ina Ruth Smith lit a candle in memory of Sara Lenora Neville Bennett Ph.D.



Ina Ruth Smith - September 11, 2020 at 06:52 PM



“ Graceful Wreath was purchased for the family of Sara Lenora Neville Bennett Ph.D..



September 11, 2020 at 04:44 PM