



Rosa Lee Tomberlin

August 17, 1926 - January 15, 2021

Mrs. Rosa Lee Tomberlin, of Lake Panasoffkee, Fla., passed away January 15, 2021 at the age of 94. Rosa Lee was born in Tampa, Fla. on August 17, 1926. In high school, Rosa Lee was a star female athlete and was named the City of Tampa's All-State Forward in basketball. After high school, she attended Florida State College for Women where she lettered in multiple sports and was in the first graduating class of Florida State University in 1948. After college, she began her teaching career at Citrus High School in Inverness, Fla. before moving to Sumter County. She then taught at Wildwood High School, followed by Coleman School, before her long career as a physical education teacher and coach at South Sumter High School. After her retirement, Rosa Lee was elected as the first female school board member in Sumter County. She was a past president of the Sumter County Retired Educators Association. She also served as president of FSU's Emeritus Alumni Association and was awarded the prestigious Circle of Gold as recognition for her achievements and service to the University. She was a long-time member of the United Methodist Church of Lake Panasoffkee. She is preceded in death by her parents Mabel and H. Oscar Whitney and her brother James Davis.

Rosa Lee is survived by her husband Edgar W. Tomberlin, son Warren Tomberlin, daughter Lucy Metz (Doug); four grandchildren: Katie Davis (Justin), Kelli Caputo (Shawn), Alex Tomberlin and Athena Tomberlin; three great-grandchildren: Owen Gray, Amelia Davis and Eli Davis; as well as

honorary sons Cecil Hurst and Michael Atherton. She also left behind many loved nieces, nephews, extended family, friends, and former students.

A memorial service to celebrate the life of Rosa Lee Tomberlin will be held on Saturday, April 17th at 10:00 a.m. at South Sumter High School's football stadium in Bushnell, Fla.

Please dress in casual attire and bring an umbrella for shade or in case of rain. Social distancing and masks are strongly encouraged.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Sumter Schools Enhancement Foundation in her name. (2680 West CR 476 Bushnell, FL 33513) A memorial scholarship in her honor will be awarded to future academic scholar athletes for generations to come with this endowment.

Arrangements are being handled by Beyers Funeral Home and Crematory - Purcell Chapel, 114 W. Noble Ave., Bushnell, FL Interment will be at Florida National Cemetery.

Tribute Wall



“ *Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Rosa Lee Tomberlin*



May 13, 2022 at 09:05 PM



“ *My mother and 2 brothers came to live at a farm in Lake City, Florida in 1948, after our father passed away. My brothers and I were age 3 to 8. The extended family became our source of belonging, the adult figures in our lives. Aunt Rosa Lee was an excellent and powerful influence on us. She was a Southern Lady, of the Old School, where manners, demeanor, integrity and character were important. She was also great fun, laughed easily and had a fantastic wit. She added a special "seasoning" to our growth and development during difficult times. We spent many days at Lake Panasoffkee fishing and enjoying Uncle Ed and Aunt Rosa Lee. The fish we caught were cooked that day, with her most excellent hush puppies (that I have never seen equaled) and the best iced tea you have ever enjoyed. She was a joy to be around and was a very positive influence on me each time I was fortunate enough to be in her company.*

In John 14:3 Jesus said "And if I go prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; That where I am, there you may be also." Amen

John H. Phelps - April 11, 2021 at 08:07 PM

RD

“ I'm forever thankful that God put in Mrs. Rosa Lee Tomberlin in my life in 1980. She was my track and softball coach at South Sumter, but she was so much more, she took an interest in me, a lost and going nowhere teenager. When she chose me among dozens of skilled softball players to be on the very first high school Lady Raider team in 1981 - WOW!! IS ALL CAN SAY. I HAD NEVER PLAYED organized softball. By the end of the season she personally bought a most improved player trophy and presented to me at the sports banquet. WOW again!! She instilled a passion in me for softball and life. I WOULD NOT be who I am today, if she hadn't of gave me a chance. I love her, respect her and will be forever grateful for Miss T. Anyone who missed having her as a teacher, coach or friend truly missed a life changing experience that I consider a great blessing. Keep your eye on the ball, she always said. You can't do anything without the ball.
I'll never forget you Miss T.
YOUR CATCHER
Rose Davis

Rose Davis - April 10, 2021 at 05:59 PM

JG

“ To write this missive is surreal to me. Because somehow, I thought I would have Mrs. Tomberlin forever. I think we all did.

As a scrawny girl of 12, I was an orphan, of sorts - misplaced and without confidence. I had no one in my life who would push me toward excellence or teach me what it took to be confident, strong and successful. No one ... until the day I walked into Mrs. Tomberlin's PE class.

Now, I could go on to tell you how frightening she was (she could be) or how she could get up in your face and straighten out your attitude real fast. (She did occasionally.)

But, what she did for me went beyond the obvious and what I learned watching her, interacting with her, - is still a part of who I am today. She was the strongest woman I have ever known and someone I admire and love deeply. She taught me that success comes from within, that life isn't easy, and that with determination and the right skills, you can succeed at anything you desire. Anytime I was afraid or unsure or beaten down by life's circumstances, her influence would rise inside me and pull me through.

Mrs. Rosa Lee Tomberlin was a Sumter County treasure. She was a woman before her time - competing in an educational sphere of male superiors and in, what was then, a man's world. She never settled or compromised her values. She could maneuver with the best of them and still keep that twinkle in her eye. She instilled a sense of pride, honor and respect in everyone who was lucky enough to know her.

Yes, Sumter County has lost a true treasure. Yet, her contributions and dedication to the Sumer County school systems will never be forgotten and the impact she had on generations of Sumter County students, especially me - all those precious memories we have of her, will remain in our hearts forever.

--- Jenny Genzale

Jenny Genzale - April 07, 2021 at 11:18 AM

JL

“ James and I send our warmest hugs to each of you on the passing of this great Lady! Mrs. T will always be a bright spot woven into the fabric of our lives! Her energy and enthusiasm for life was contagious and the memory of her will always make us smile. This next dance is for you Mrs. T!

James Jeanne Lively - January 22, 2021 at 09:58 AM

CB

“ You will forever have a special place in my heart. You showed me care and compassion for which I am eternally grateful. I never felt underprivileged in your presence, as I did around others at SSHS. Rest in Peace. Lucy and Warren had an amazing prize having you as their mother all these years.

Carrie (Ennis) Bailey - January 21, 2021 at 09:02 AM

VK

“ I enjoyed and will certainly miss all of our Seminole conversations.
Mr. T, Warren, and Lucy, you are in my thoughts and prayers.

Valerie King

Valerie King - January 18, 2021 at 01:24 PM

AB

“ *My deepest condolences to the family and all that loved "Miss T". This special lady touched and made a positive impact on so many lives and she will be dearly missed!*

Many years ago my family moved to Bushnell a couple weeks into the school year. My sister Karen (we lost her in 2013 to lung cancer) and I were in our Junior year and were missing the required PE classes. As luck would have it, our homeroom was the same, PE with Miss T. We were given paperwork to fill out, and were quickly informed as we wrote, that "Sum()ter DOES NOT have a P in it"! I never misspelled Sumter again!!!

We had been attending SSHS for about a month when I realized that Miss T knew my sister pretty well, this became evident to me as I heard her exclaim in a rather loud voice, "Martin, you'd argue with a fence post"!

She tried, Lord knows she did, but Miss T could not teach me my left from my right. One of our assignments was marching, Us girls were all lined up and marching to Miss T's commands. I was good going forward, it was that left face, right face that messed me up and in turn whoever was close to me. The commands became... "left face, Martin, your other left"! I still struggle with that whole left, right thing.

Mrs Tomberlin was not a miracle worker, she was a teacher, an educator, an ear, she was there for her students, she was a good woman and I adored her.

Rest in Peace Miss T, Love and hugs, Antoinette

Annie Martin Brown Bonnett - January 18, 2021 at 01:54 AM

FB

“ To all of you,
This is Freddie Bullock. Or to Mrs. T, "Freddie Baby." A name I have cherished for most of my life. Words cannot express. I loved her for all she did; she always believed in me. Her approval of me many times guided my decisions. My career of 40 years I PRAY has emulated her. Last time I spoke to her, I told her I hope I made her proud. Of course, she gave me credit. She will forever be in my thoughts and heart. I am glad I had her phone number the last couple of months and got to speak to her. God bless all of you.

Freddie Bullock - January 17, 2021 at 09:58 PM

SM

“ *My prayers are lifted for Mr. Tomberlin , Lucy, and Warren and their families during this sad time. I pray God will touch your hearts and help you get through this difficult time.*

Mr. and Mrs. Tomberlin always seemed like part of my family because of my father teaching school with them. I was not an athlete, but Mrs. Tomberlin always encouraged me at school. She had a 'grip' on my arm and those beautiful blue eyes that she would focus on me whenever she had something to say to me. They were both kind and encouraging and protective of me.

I have good memories but am sorry for your loss. Love, Sheila

Sheila Witt Michele - January 17, 2021 at 04:46 PM

SM

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Sheila Witt Michele - January 17, 2021 at 04:44 PM

SJ

“ She was my PE teacher.
She was my cheerleading sponsor.
She was a fellow teacher.
She was a fellow member of the Sumter County Education Association.
She was my school board member.
She was a fellow FSU fan
She was a fellow Lake Panasoffkee resident
And she will be missed more than words can say!

Susan Letzring Jones - January 17, 2021 at 03:53 PM