

Virginia Mims Heglar Alexander Neustadt!

Virginia Mims Heglar Alexander Neustadt died in her home in Raleigh on February 19, 2025. Ginger was born in Florence, South Carolina, on August 18, 1939, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J.L. Mims. To describe her life as “interesting” is an understatement. “LiveS” is the word that better characterizes her 85 years.

Her first life was as the daughter of her medical student father and nurse mother, first in South Carolina, then in New Jersey, and ultimately, when he completed his training, in Northern Virginia. Along the way she graduated from George Washington High School in Alexandria and Palmer College School of Business in Charleston. Her own early professional life included working for Western Electric Company and Wachovia Bank in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

Her marriage to Everette Heglar brought Ginger and her first daughter Ann to Lincoln County, where her children Heidi and Rhett were born. Rhett later brought his wife, Sally, to join the family. Grandchildren Heston and Hayden enriched Ginger’s life, becoming, in fact, a principal focus on her final years. She launched her civil and political careers from there. She is credited, in fact, with bringing the Republican Party into prominence in the area, serving as an activist from 1964. In 1972 she became Secretary of the North Carolina

Federation of Republican Women. The next dozen years found her in a variety of grander roles—including Vice-President as well as President of the Federation, Editor of the State Republican Newsletter, and Member of the Jesse Helms and Jim Martin local congressional committees. She was also a regular delegate to the National Federation of Republican Women's Conventions. Additionally she worked as the manager of Lutherhaus, a senior citizens residence for Lutherans, at the same time she served on the board of the local hospital and was active in both the PTA and the Chamber of Commerce. She managed Bob Dole's campaign and developed a special friendship with Elizabeth Dole. She ultimately was elected to the NC Republican Party's Hall of Fame and received the Ninth Congressional District Grassroots Leadership Award.

It is no surprise that her political interests eventually led her to take up permanent residence in North Carolina's capital city, Raleigh, where she served in Jim Martin's administration as Director of North Carolina Juvenile Detention Service, committed to improving the lives of juveniles. Ginger cherished this work, embracing the opportunity it gave her to serve North Carolina's youth. She was most appreciative of the knowledge and skills of those who worked with her.

In Raleigh Ginger continued her enthusiastic engagement with the church, where she not only found her spiritual and social justice community but her husband, John Alexander, himself a member of White Memorial Presbyterian and benefactor of numerous local projects including the Alexander YMCA and Camp Sea Gull. His son Johnny Mac and daughter-in-law Susan became important family members to Ginger as did their children, Mary Carroll and Catherine. It is no surprise that both Ginger and John Alexander and Johnny Mac were recipients of the Order of the Longleaf Pine, considered North Carolina's highest honorary society. She served her church as a deacon, an elder, the Moderator of Presbyterian Women, and a Stephen Minister.

Upon her official retirement Ginger enrolled at Meredith College in the WINGS program, which serves students 23 years old and older. She graduated with a degree in religion in May of 2005 when she was 65. The high point in her

education was the 12 weeks she studied abroad in both Italy and England with traditional aged students. She bravely (and enthusiastically) lived dormitory style/bathroom on the hall amongst them. She describes that time as one of the best in her life. Influencing that positive assessment no doubt was her chance reconnection with her old friend Bill Neustadt in London. The rest as they say is history. Widow and widower, they combined their two richly interesting, independent lives and families, marrying in June of 2005. Ginger loved Bill's interesting and talented children-- Deborah, Karen, and Beth--and took great delight in their children--Kelly, Ashley, and Ryan.

In 2014, Ginger joined Meredith College's Board of Trustees, serving on the Academic and Campus Life Committee. In addition she generously endowed a scholarship that would enable other Meredith students to study abroad and she herself continued to travel the world. Especially touching was her insistence in the final days of her life in writing a check in advance of Meredith's Giving Day to enlarge her grant.

Ginger exited life as she had lived it—bravely. With her husband at her side she enjoyed a steady stream of visits from friends and family, supported daily by her lovely caretakers Chanda Moore and Esther Mbugua. All miss her but none doubt she is resting in peace.

Funeral arrangements;

Ginger's memorial service will be held at White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh on Friday March 7th at 2:00pm with a reception in the Jane Bell gathering space following the service. The burial service will be at the Salem cemetery in Winston-Salem on Saturday, March 8th at 11:00 am with a reception following in the parlor of the Moravian Home Church in old Salem. Parking is available at Salem Funerals and Cremations on 120 S. Main Street.

Condolences may be made in the comments section below