



Elizabeth Harper

May 15, 1921 - February 17, 2023

Elizabeth “Libby” Harper, age 101-1/2 years old, passed away peacefully on Friday, February 17, 2023 at Healthcare & Rehab of Sanford from the devastating affects of dementia. She had been a resident of that facility since 2012 following a severe slip-and-fall accident with associated head trauma.

Libby was born in Parkton, North Carolina, the 9th of 10 children of Robert Arthur Wright and Mamie Chason Wright. She grew up in Lumber Bridge, graduated from Parkton High School, then worked during the first years of WWII in North Carolina and New Jersey before marrying a young Army lieutenant, Neal “Gar” Anthony Harper, Jr. She traveled for 30 years as an Army wife, including assignments in Fukuoka, Japan (1948-1951), Ft. Richardson, (territory of) Alaska (1956-1959), and Vicenza, Italy (1961-1964), and at U.S. Army posts in Oklahoma, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, Texas, California and Nevada. She often “held down the fort” at home when her husband was away serving in the South Pacific, Korea, or Viet Nam. In 1970, Col. Harper retired from the military, and he and Libby settled in Seminole County, where they had the most beautiful yard in Fern Park. Libby was an avid gardener, with 2 green thumbs. One neighbor, to ensure success with his garden, asked her to come tell his new citrus trees that it was she who planted them. And yet, she was also guilty of killing plants. As a “one drink only” woman, she would pour a second drink on a plant when someone gave it to her. Libby was responsible for the demise of philodendron in

officers' clubs on 3 continents that way.

Libby and Gar had 5 children: Diana, Victoria, Susan, Neal III, and Linda; 9 grandchildren; 17 great-grands; and 8 great-great grands. She was preceded in death by Gar, her husband of 58 years, and daughter Victoria who was killed in a car crash at age 21. She was known to "mother" any number of children over the years and helped raise several grandchildren. Recently, she complained that her hands had become ugly, gnarled and arthritic, spotted and blue-veined. Her daughter contradicted her: those were, in fact, beautiful hands that put together countless lunches, changed diapers, bandaged up boobos, rocked babies to sleep, helped with science projects, prepared meals, fed the pets, planted seeds and bulbs, harvested fruit, made endless cupcakes for bake sales, sewed costumes, ironed clothes, transported legions of kids to the gym and pool, games or camp, cleaned house and garden.

Libby spent her entire adult life as a dedicated volunteer in many ways and in locations around the globe: as a Red Cross Gray Lady, manager of Officers Wives Thrift Shops, Sunday School teacher, School Nurse, PTA Room Mother, Army Wives Orphanage Care Team, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, church choirs and choral groups, and library volunteer. She became one of the founding members of the Friends of the Library of Seminole County in 1981, serving on the board of directors, and instrumental in the creation of and managing the Friends' used bookstore at the Jean Rhein Central Branch Library in Casselberry. She volunteered at the bookstore until age 85 and was recognized by the Seminole County Board of Commissioners several times.

Arrangements have been entrusted to DeGusipe Funeral Home, Sanford. A celebration of Life get-together will be held on Saturday, March 4th from 11am-2pm in the Ballroom of Serenity Towers on the St. Johns, 519 E. 1st St., Sanford (parking only along 1st Street, Pine Street, or in the Family Dollar parking lot.) Memorials should be made to any veterans organization or to the

Seminole County Friends of the Library, 215 N. Oxford Rd., Fern Park, FL.

Tribute Wall

BG

“ *Our Prayers to Diane and Family, in this time of loss, Mrs. Harper was a beautiful lady, we enjoy great talks about her life traveling with the Family, and she had the best supporting Family close to her all the time.*

Barbara I Guillen - March 03, 2023 at 09:03 PM

CC

“ *My sincerest condolences to you and your family.*

Carol Copeland - February 24, 2023 at 10:27 PM

KS

“ *Diane, Our love, thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.*



Karen & Bob Smith - February 23, 2023 at 07:57 AM