



Ruth Holmes

November 26, 1924 - September 2, 2021

Ruth Bradley Holmes, author, linguistic scholar, and mother of seven, passed away peacefully in Bartlesville, Oklahoma on September 2, 2021 surrounded by her loving family. She was 96.

Edith Frances Ruth Bradley was born in Beijing, China on November 26, 1924 to Edith Louise Grierson Bradley and Hugh Wise Bradley, the Commissioner of Chinese Maritime Customs. She spent her childhood in China, but relocated to California in 1938. Mrs. Holmes attended Dominican Convent School for high school before graduating from the University of California at Berkeley with a B.A. in Slavic languages. She was fluent in Russian, Portuguese and French and proficient in German, Greek, Latin and Spanish. Her language skills enabled her to work as a Russian translator at the first United Nations conference in San Francisco in April 1945. She continued to use her language skills throughout her life, teaching Russian at Louisiana State University (LSU) and later teaching adult language Russian classes and working as a translator for TRW-Reda Pump and other delegations visiting Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville.

Always curious, she continued to pursue her education by studying English literature at LSU in 1947 and, later, attending the Middlebury Language Institute in Vermont for an intensive program to study the economic geography of Russia taught exclusively in Russian in 1971, and a summer program at Oxford University to study 17th century philosophy in 1976.

During World War II, along with her mother, she volunteered at a Santa Cruz,

CA hospital. One day, her mother spotted a handsome male patient, Clifford Holmes, who had been admitted with a serious leg injury and suggested Ruth go visit him because he was reading esoteric philosophy; he clearly needed cheering up. That meeting grew into a courtship and eventual marriage in Santa Cruz in 1945. Living in a number of locations in their early marriage, the Holmes family ultimately settled in Bartlesville when Cliff was transferred from Salt Lake City, Utah by Phillips Petroleum Company to their corporate headquarters in 1959.

She is survived by her children, Alexander (wife, Laddor) of Norman, daughter-in-law Julie of Phoenix, Sven (wife, Lois Romano) of Washington D.C., Hugh (wife, Mabel) of Hong Kong, Kurt (wife, Daniela) of Tulsa, Madeline of Bartlesville, and Alison (partner, Duncan Burgess) of Arcata, CA. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Clifford Holmes; son, Cameron (Kip) of Phoenix; and her brother, Ian Henri Cairns Bradley of Asheville, NC.

As the mother of seven, Mrs. Holmes was active in a range of education and youth organizations including serving as President of the Parent-Teacher Association, a Troop Leader for both the Boy and Girl Scouts, a Director on the board of the YMCA, and as part of the YWCA Board that founded the Youth Employment Service (YES) that later became a state program.

Beyond her family interests, she was also a member of a number of civic, writing, and women's organizations including the American Association of University Women, Thoda Study Club, Kappa Alpha Theta Alumnae Club, Bartlesville Library Board, Tuesday Club and the Bartlesville Writers Club. Beginning in the late 1960s, Mrs. Holmes became interested in Native American languages, particularly Cherokee, and worked with native speaker, Betty Smith, to write the first ever language teaching text, *Beginning Cherokee* in 1976. A second edition came out in 1978, timed to coincide with an audio version produced by the two women. Mrs. Holmes continued her language work and created a transliteration in 2004, *The Four Gospels and Selected Psalms in Cherokee: A Companion to the Syllabary New Testament*.

She presented her work at a number of linguistic conferences, particularly on what she saw as the links between Cherokee and other languages around the world. These included an invitation to present at the eleventh international Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Canada. She remained a member of the Linguistic Society of America and the American Anthropological Association.

Mrs. Holmes was also active politically, serving as the President of the Washington County Democratic Women's Club, and as Campaign Manager of Washington County for Governor, later U.S. Senator David Boren. Governor Boren later appointed Mrs. Holmes to the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges where she served from 1976-1985 and which she chaired in 1981-1982.

Other awards include a book award from the Cherokee Nation in 1977, Central State University's Distinguished Service Award as part of their Scholars Series, Southwest Poetry Award, Gemstone Poetry Award and the local Allied Arts and Humanitarian Award for Literature.

Mrs. Holmes, like her husband, felt her greatest accomplishment was her family and was always proud of her seven children, fourteen grand-children, five great-grandchildren, with three more on the way. A devoted matriarch, she was an unrivalled role model and treated all people with generosity and respect as the glue that held the family together. She will be greatly missed by all.

The family would like to express heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Donald Simmons and the staff of Kindful Hospice for their caring support. A memorial service will be held at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bartlesville at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday September 11th. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to The National Pancreas Foundation.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Redeemer Lutheran
3700 SE Woodland Rd.
Bartlesville, OK

Tribute Wall



“ *Ruth Holmes*

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ *Ruth Holmes*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM