



Virginia Neely Sweet

August 6, 1923 - November 17, 2012

Virginia Neely Sweet, born in DeQueen, Arkansas on August 6, 1923, the daughter of Earnest Roy Neely and Gertrude Josephine Dildy, and the widow of Edward Muir (Tid) Sweet (to whom she was wed 59 years, 3 months and 18 days), died peacefully and gratefully in the company of her sister, Joan Fraser, on Saturday morning, November 17 at Jane Phillips Hospital.

She is survived by her beloved daughter, Jan Sweet Freeman of Hillsborough, NC; her sister Joan Neely Fraser and brother-in-law, H. B. Fraser of Bartlesville; nephews David Fraser, Robert (Bob) Fraser, Michael Fraser, Joe Neely, Jim Neely; and long-time family friend of Tokyo, Japan, Fumiko Kudaka.

Married to the love of her life in 1942, after graduating from high school in her hometown of Muskogee, she and Tid and Jan lived throughout the United States with a final tour on Okinawa, Japan. She and Tid settled in Bartlesville in 1967.

An employee and volunteer of art instruction at the Bartlesville Public Schools, she taught for 30 years on all levels from pre-K through senior high school. She was a strong advocate for youth and art in the schools.

For a number of years she served as chairman for Bartlesville Art Association committees that reviewed high school student portfolios and awarded scholarships to graduating art students from both Bartlesville High School and Dewey High School, as well as other area schools.

She brought her passion for teaching and encouraging the love of art to community youth, and the young at heart, regardless of education, age, or experience, teaching privately and professionally for over 40 years in pottery, collage, oil, acrylic, watercolor, printmaking, paper-making, book construction, sculpture, drawing, and pastel. Participating in numerous group exhibits as well as more than a dozen one-woman art shows, her commitment to the arts and teaching remained constant throughout her life.

As the first elected and founding member of the Bartlesville Arts and Humanities Council, she served as counselor and advisor for the organization for many years. In 1974 she received the Outstanding Citizen Award from the organization and was also honored by inclusion in Taproots, a locally authored and published book series featuring exceptional women in the area.

She attended the Joslyn School of Art in Omaha, Nebraska for three years studying design, portrait oil, life drawing, watercolor and acrylic painting. She was also a graduate of the Sogetsu School of Flower Arranging of Tokyo, Japan. She studied Japanese flower arranging while her family lived on Okinawa as well as pottery, drawing, and painting. She served as President of Ikebana International of Tulsa (Chapter # 75) for two consecutive terms and taught both flower arranging and pottery making for the Tulsa Ikebana chapter. An insatiable student, she attended a lifetime of individual workshops throughout the U.S. studying a wide variety of mediums.

Virginia was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, the Bartlesville Art

Association, the Bartlesville Arts and Humanities Council, the Tulsa Garden Center, Ikebana of Tulsa, the Price Tower Art Center Museum, and described herself as a child of God, a mother, a teacher, and an artist.

Virginia's memorial service will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 2:00 PM at the First Presbyterian Church, 505 SE Dewey, Bartlesville, with a reception to follow at the Art Center in Johnstone Park. In lieu of flowers, she may be remembered by contributions to Martha's Task, 718 S. Johnstone; the Bartlesville Art Association Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 961; or the First Presbyterian Church Youth and Education Fund, 505 SE Dewey--all of Bartlesville.

PDF Printable Version

Tribute Wall



“ Virginia Neely Sweet

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ Virginia Neely Sweet

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ I became acquainted with Virginia shortly after I arrived on Okinawa in 1965 to teach in the Defense Department high school. Her husband, Tid, was the fourth cousin of my friend and later husband, Jerry Sweet. Virginia always made dinners at her house into parties: she would get us all involved in making art. One evening she had the men create Japanese flower arrangements; another, she taught us to make marbelized paper.

My parents were unable to attend my wedding on July 1, 1967, to Jerry, so Tid became my proxy father and walked me down the aisle; Virginia was my proxy mother, dressed elegantly in beige.

In 1979 I took my boys, ages nine and eleven, to see Tid and Virginia. She quickly got us involved in making items out of clay, which she fired so we could take them home with us. I still treasure the clay cross we made.

I am grateful that I was able to talk with Virginia over the phone this past September. She was still busy with her art! She was a dear friend. I will miss her greatly.

Sally Cross Sweet Johnson - January 17, 2013 at 12:00 AM

PR

“ Mrs. Sweet was a huge influence on me as I grew up in Bartlesville back in the 70's. She was my art teacher for several summers during my adolescent years. I remember going to her house and taking classes in her studio. A favorite memory is learning how to paint from photographs. I still have my first acrylic painting she helped me with. She always had fresh cookies as a snack which brought a sense of comfort to the experience. She was always supportive and kind and my lessons were positive which kept me interested in persuing art as a career. Several years ago, I went to OK Mozart and found a painting for sale that I fell in love with. Much to my pleasure, I discovered it was painted by Mrs. Sweet. I bought it and treasure it to this day. It is a painting of angels playing music. Coincidentally, unbeknownst to either of us, my grandmother bought the sister painting that goes along with it. We loved the coincidence, which makes the paintings even more special as my grandmother lives in Michigan and we love the fact that our paintings tie us together. Mrs. Sweet's influence continues in my life as I studied graphic design and fine art and now currently work as an art therapist. She will be missed but lives on in both in my art as well as my heart.

Pam Rice - December 09, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Virginia taught us about Love.

Helen Dunne - November 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Mrs. Sweet was my art teacher and friend for many years. She inspired me to pursue my dream of becoming an artist. She came along when I needed a mentor and I feel very lucky to have known her. My deepest sympathies to her family.
Don Statham

Don Statham - November 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ I was blessed to have met Virginia probably 10+ years ago while working for Arvest bank in Dewey, OK. It was such a delight to see her smiling face come into the bank. She reminded me of my own grandmother that lived in Montana that was an artist as well. She made me feel like a piece of my grandma was close by. We became great friends as the months went by as she had me balance her books for her every month. Even after the birth of my son 7 years ago we kept in touch now and then and she even drew a picture of my son when he was an infant that I will cherish. I was very saddened to hear of Virginia's passing but know she is busy painting beautiful things that we can not even imagine. I was blessed knowing her.

Thank you,
Shannon Brown, Ramona, OK

Shannon Brown - November 26, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ My thoughts and prayers with all of you who loved Virginia. May you be filled with love and peace during this difficult time of adjustment. My fond memories of both Virginia & Tid begin in the mid 1960's when we were rather new to Bartlesville - and interested in art and golf. She projected such radiant beauty with her smile and her upbeat positive approach to all, making work with her a treat. May she rest in peace.

Jo Anne Lewis - November 26, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ I was so sorry to hear that my namesake has passed. My Mom and Dad spoke of her often when I was growing up and I never forgot who I was named after. To this day I have some of the pictures she painted of our camp hanging on my wall. I will treasure them always.

-jenna

Jenna Thibault - November 21, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Our most sincere condolences for the loss of Virginia. We light a candle in honor of your memory that still burns in the hearts of many.

Staff at Stumpff Funeral Home - November 20, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Virginia is one of my favorite memories !! She was a very special "Lady".
I am sure Odie had the door open and now Virginia and Tid are giggling and dancing on Streets of Gold.

Sammye Hughlett - November 20, 2012 at 12:00 AM