

Eulene Locke dies; services Tuesday

Northeast Elementary School Principal Eulene Locke, a former Putnam school superintendent, died Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005, at her home. The longtime educator was 66.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m. in the auditorium of Avery Trace Middle School with Rev. C. Vance Johnson officiating. Burial will be in Crest Lawn Memorial Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the Cookeville chapel of Hooper Huddleston Horner Funeral Home tomorrow from 4 to 8 p.m. and after 12 noon Tuesday.

The daughter of the late Boyd and Bonnie Benson Qualls, Mrs. Locke was born June 19, 1938, in Putnam County.

She was the widow of the late George Edward Locke Sr. and was also preceded in death by sisters Camella Livingston and Mary Dean Davis and brothers Elwin Qualls and Lynon Qualls.

Her family includes her son and daughter-in-law, Eddy and Kim Locke of Cookeville; her grandson, Ethan Locke of Cookeville; her sister and brother-in-law, Linda and Jimmy Whiteaker of Algood; her brother and sister-in-law, Sam and Earlene Qualls of Algood; her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Bob and Dorothy West of Orlando, Fla.; her grand nephew, Cory Moody; an aunt, Edith Benson of Algood; and special caregiver Jeanette Smith.

Mrs. Locke was a member of Algood United Methodist Church.

She was a graduate of Tennessee Tech. From the days when she was a basketball star at Algood High, Doris Eulene Qualls Locke loved school, and with the exception of only a few years working in other fields -- social work and state probation work -- she devoted the major part of her life to education, serving in many roles, including teacher, coach, school board member, principal and superintendent of schools.

She was elected to the Putnam school board three times and served from 1971 to 1986. The first woman ever elected chairman of that board, she served in that position three times.

She taught school at Cookeville Junior High for many years and, after leaving the school board, served as principal of Northeast Elementary until 1996 when she was elected to the superintendency for a four-year term.

She was the first woman elected to the superintendency here and was the last elected superintendent to serve before the state began requiring board-appointed directors of schools.

After serving that term as superintendent, she was appointed principal of Cane Creek Elementary and later returned to the principalship at Northeast. Last year, she became ill and took sick leave for a time, then returned to school after her health improved. In recent months, she had been on sick leave once again.

But she never lost her interest in public education, and she remained mentally alert and unfailingly polite and kind throughout her illness, always taking time to thank her caregivers for their work, friends said.

"Every time I have been in other jobs, I always came back to education," she said in an interview back in 2000. "I don't know of a job anywhere that I would enjoy more than school."

Active pallbearers will be Wayne Stephens, Mark Rodgers, Pat Haller, Scott Kirkham, Jason Smith, Jeanette Smith, Jackie Borden and James Swack. Honorary pallbearers will be the faculty and staff of Northeast Elementary School.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Algood United Methodist Church building fund.

The Cookeville chapel of Hooper Huddleston Horner Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

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Schools to close early for Locke services

All Putnam County schools will close at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, Feb. 15, in honor of Eulene Locke, principal and former school superintendent who died Saturday.

Mrs. Locke's funeral is to be held in the auditorium of Avery Trace Middle School at 2 p.m.

Director of Schools Michael Martin said schools will close early tomorrow "out of respect to Mrs. Locke and her family."

"She had wide experience in education here and over the years, touched every part of our K-12 operations," Martin said.

Mrs. Locke had been a teacher, a coach, a school board member, superintendent of schools, and a principal.

Martin said many teachers, students, and other school employees want to attend the funeral.

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