



Martina Cummings Bowman

January 18, 2016 - January 18, 2016

Martina Cummings Bowman, 89, of Oskaloosa passed away on Monday, January 18, 2016, at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. Born Helen (pronounced He-leen) Martina Cummings on January 24, 1926, in Warthen, Georgia, she was the oldest child of Vera and Oscar Cummings. She soon had two younger brothers, Hudson (Sonny) and Frank. Martina went to school in Warthen and Sandersville, Georgia, and played basketball as a high schooler. She graduated early in 1942. Martina attended the Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville, Georgia, her freshman year. She transferred to Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, her sophomore year, where she majored in education and met her red-headed husband, Allen J. Bowman. Martina graduated in 1946 and the two were married on September 8th of that year. They set up housekeeping in Wilmore while Allen finished seminary. In 1947, Martina and Allen moved to Alva, Oklahoma, where their two sons, Bill and David, were born. In 1950 the family moved to Wichita, Kansas, and Julie was added to the family a few years later. The family moved again in 1959 to Albany, California – outside the Bay Area. While there, Martina began working as a teacher's aide for children with special needs, which was to become her life's work. In 1966 the family moved to Oskaloosa, Iowa, where Martina began teaching special education and history at the junior high. This was a time when public schools were just beginning special education programs, and Martina helped shape the program for Oskaloosa and Mahaska County. Martina taught for 24 years, retiring in 1990. Throughout her life Martina was an avid gardener, and she loved arranging fresh flowers every Sunday at College Avenue Friends Meeting, where she was an active member. At College Avenue Friends, she had many roles but is best remembered for her many years of leadership on the Fellowship and Helpfulness Committee which provided meals for church functions. Martina loved to read (fiction only). She often would read the last chapter of a book first if she was unsure of whether or not she would like the ending. She also loved music. She passed these passions on to her three children. She read the newspaper cover to cover every day. She saved the funnies for last as they were her favorite part of the paper. She would be disgusted if they weren't actually funny. Martina enjoyed cooking and was well-known for her ham balls, fried okra, creamed corn, biscuits, homemade peach ice cream, and any kind of cookie you could think of. She and Allen traveled once they retired, including

several trips in the U.S. and Europe. She collected cranberry glass on their travels. She was a constant doodler and a dedicated maker of lists. She loved to watch the birds on the bird feeders outside her kitchen window. Martina welcomed four grandchildren into the world – Camille, Evan, Aiden and Liam – and loved them dearly. Martina will be remembered as a lady with a Southern accent and a great sense of Southern hospitality. She will also be remembered for birthday cards. She made it her mission to send birthday cards to every friend, every church member, every colleague, and every relative on either side of the family. At a family reunion several years ago, she met a sister-in-law's grandson who was old enough to be entering the seminary. They had never met before, but he knew her because she had sent him a birthday card every year since he had been born. She was a caring wife, mother, teacher and friend, with a deep sense of faith, the hottest water and sharpest knives in her kitchen, and a wicked sense of humor. Martina's family includes her husband, Allen J. Bowman, her children and their spouses: Bill and Kim Bowman of Lake Forest, California, Julie Bowman and Scott Bates of Evanston, Illinois, her daughter-in-law Karla Bowman, of Canal Fulton, Ohio; four grandchildren: Camille Bates, Evan Bates, Aiden Bowman and Liam Bowman; her brother Frank Cummings and numerous in-laws, nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, Martina was preceded in death by her son, David Bowman, and her brother, Hudson (Sonny) Cummings.