



Mrs. Downing Jett Kay

November 23, 1907 - May 15, 2020

Downing Jett Kay, aged 112, died peacefully on May 15, 2020 at Pickersgill Retirement Community in Towson. At the time of her death, she was likely the oldest living person in Maryland.

Mrs. Kay was raised on Carlisle Avenue in Forest Park, Baltimore and was in the inaugural class to be graduated from Forest Park High School in 1926.

She later graduated from the State Normal School — now Towson University - in 1931 and began teaching in the Baltimore City public schools.

Subsequently, she was a Gallup Poll interviewer and, later, gathered census information for the Commerce Department during WWII.

In 1950, Mrs. Kay became one of the founding teachers at Grace & St. Peters School (now the Wilkes School) and taught there for more than twenty years.

She remained close to her students and the school for many years after retirement. She later volunteered with the Orton Society assessing kindergarten children with learning difficulties. Active throughout her lifetime in the Methodist Church, she was a member of Grace United Methodist Church at the time of her death.

Known to many as Gramma D. or Aunt Downing, she reigned for decades as the matriarch of her large extended family. She attributed her longevity to living her motto, “Make new friends, but keep the old.” Mrs. Kay was a member of the PEO and the Johns Hopkins Club. She was an avid Scrabble

player and played well into her 111th year. She started each day with the juice of half a lemon and drank endless half-cups of black coffee.

The former Anne Downing Jett was married to her high school sweetheart, George Alexander Kay in 1932. He preceded her in death in 1979 as did her son, George A. Kay III in 2009. Mrs. Kay is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Anne and Bill Joyner of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and her daughter-in-law, Joan Kay of Severna Park, Maryland along with seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions in her honor may be made to Grace United Methodist Church, 407 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21210 or Pickersgill Retirement Community, 615 Chestnut Ave, Baltimore, MD 21204. A memorial service will be held at a future date in November 2020.