

Ruth Haston Norwood

5/15/1929 to 04/03/2021

Ruth Haston Norwood, my mother, passed away this past Saturday morning. She was 91. Though she sought to live to be 100 years old, her health declined and she struggled mightily against diabetes, end-stage renal disease, and a variety of heart conditions. She was nearly deaf during the last quarter of her life but each day was another opportunity for her to read and to garden. However, even these activities became more and more difficult as her body began to age. She loved watching MSNBC news coverage and watched it pretty much every day of her last years in life and would usually make a comment to me on something she'd seen that day when I visited with her. She supported President Biden for President during the primary season and was elated that he won the presidency. Of course, living to see Vice-President Harris become our first woman vice president was very, very special to her.

Mother is survived by a daughter and two sons, several grandchildren and greatgrandchildren, as well as two sisters and one brother. The Haston Six is now three. She taught her children to love to read, and collected over four thousand books throughout the years. During our childhood, in Amarillo, she'd read to us at night after a long day's work at the insurance office she worked at. We were treated to classics like "Little Women" and "Little Men," to name just two.

She graduated from Amarillo College, then from West Texas State University, and then from Texas Tech University. She became a junior college professor, teaching in Louisiana, Michigan, California, and ultimately, the Virgin Islands, before moving to Houston and working as an accountant. Mother took and passed the CPA exam on her first sitting when it was a five-part exam, 19.5 hours in duration, and administered over two and one-half days. Passage rates today on the four-part, 16-hour, two-day exam are much higher than the pre-1994 exam that Mother took, but even today the passage rate is barely 50 percent on each of the four sections.

After years of struggling with cars breaking down, she bought an apartment near her work so that she could walk to work. Several years later she sold the apartment and bought a small RV and hit the road. Sure enough, it, too, had to be serviced at nearly every stop. Just the same, her favorite saying was, "Don't fence me in." Coming from a farming family, and living on the land, she wanted to explore as much as she could. Turkey, England, and Alaska, were just a few of the many places she visited.

Mother will be buried just north of Spencer, Tennessee, in a family cemetery, the Haston Cemetery, which she visited after countless hours of genealogical research on our family. She'd wanted to be buried there for the last thirty-plus years. A graveside gathering is set for this Saturday, April 10, 2021, at 10:00 am.

I'll miss my mother every day of my life. I thank our creator that I had the opportunity to be with her during the last years of her life, and that I was with her at her bedside when she passed in her own home surrounded by her books and all the many things she collected during her lifetime. Anyone reading this, take note, one's mother can be your best advocate and friend. Don't let a day go by that she doesn't know how much you care. I loved her dearly.

Happy trails, Mother. No more fences. You're free to roam. Enjoy yourself and chart the way. We'll be there in a little while.

-Eric Willard, son