



## Sarah "Tommie" Lunsford Bumgarner

December 18, 1932 - December 17, 2022

Sarah "Tommie" Lunsford Bumgarner passed away on December 17th, one day shy of her 90th birthday.

Tommie was born December 18, 1932, in Andrews, NC, the 11th of 14 children of George

W. Lunsford and Ora Thomasson. She excelled as a student and loved school, attending Mars Hill College and earning an education degree in Math and Religious Education from Mercer College in Macon Georgia. Along the way she won many academic medals, and speech awards, and was valedictorian of her high school class, which she said didn't count because there were only 12 students in her class.

Tommie went on to teach for over 30 years in North Carolina starting in Raleigh, NC where she met Jerry, her love and husband of 53 years. It was only after her girls were in college that she revealed the family secret that he had been a returning student and dropped out again so they could be together. From Raleigh, she taught in Stanly County where students still invite her to class reunions and frequently called. After several years at Harding High School in Charlotte, she retired from A.C. Reynolds's High School in Asheville, NC where she taught for 20 years.

"Ms. B" as she was fondly called was loved by her students and respected by her peers. As chair of the Math Department, she mentored many new teachers helping them become better and more confident. She started the Academic Olympics, ran the magazine sales, the prom, the math club, the

radio show, and countless other things that most teachers still do today in addition to teaching. She leaves behind a legacy of public service that has carried through the generations with all two daughters and 2 granddaughters serving as professional educators.

One of her students described it best; “She was always kind to me although I seldom deserved it”

Through her example, she demonstrated what unconditional love looks like and an ‘it could always be worse’ attitude. She cared for her mother-in-law for many years, she won a writing contest about a nest of baby birds in the wisteria on our porch, and her story was published in the Charlotte Observer. Tommie always had a loving home, and we hosted many people over the years who needed a caring refuge; A cousin changing schools, an aunt changing town, and a student who had lost both his parents and became a brother to us.

Tommie found joy in simple things because that is what she had. She enjoyed reading and writing, working in a garden, and in her final years liked to sit on the deck and watch the river roll by.

She leaves behind her children; Margaret Bumgarner of Sugar Mountain, Lynne Bryant (Jeff) of Tennessee, Sarah Bumgarner Major (Neil) of Pinehurst, Tom Owen (Pat) of Maggie Valley, and five adoring grandchildren; Neil Major, John Major, Ruth Major Farlow (Calvin), Rachel Moon (Griffin), Carson Bryant and four great-grandchildren; Porter, Hudson, Silas, and Stokely.

Tommie is also survived by three loving siblings, James Lunsford of Pennsylvania, Lelia (David) Young of Canton, and Loster Lunsford (Sue) of Robbinsville, along with a large extended family of nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life is being planned for late January and will be announced when plans are finalized. In lieu of flowers, contributions to your favorite charity in memory of mother would be appreciated.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JAN 21. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Lutheridge Bischoff Center  
2511 Hendersonville Road  
Arden, NC 28704

# Tribute Wall



“ Sarah "Tommie" Lunsford Bumgarner

October 09, 2023 at 01:52 AM



“ Sarah "Tommie" Lunsford Bumgarner

October 08, 2023 at 10:49 PM



“ Mrs. Bumgarner was the epitome of a great person! Her classes always showed what great teachers look like in their work. Hers was a life well lived.

**Ed Graham** - December 27, 2022 at 09:58 PM



“ Mrs. B and Jerry were both wonderful people. They invited my husband, Tom Owens to live with their family after his parents died. Mrs. B was his math teacher. Years later our son, Josh Hill would attend AC Reynolds H.S. before Mrs. B retired. We all loved and respected her dearly. She will be missed greatly.  
Tom and Pat Owens  
Josh Hill and Family

**Patricia Gooding Owens** - December 25, 2022 at 12:24 PM

BW

“ *What a fantastic lady who had a wonderful husband and a beautiful family. Not only was she a positive influence on a multitude of students, but also for me as a young teacher. There is a quote that says "We pass through this world but once." May we do it as gracefully and graciously as Ms. B.*

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**Bob Washel** - December 23, 2022 at 10:38 AM

CB

“ *So sad at this time of year. I loved her and Mr. B so much. Growing up as neighbors and then as my teachers I owe them so much for the success life has brought me. 😭*

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**Chris Banks** - December 23, 2022 at 10:21 AM

PH

“ *Mrs. B was a fine lady and teacher. She was always ready to help anybody that needed it. I haven't seen or heard from her since I graduated from A.C. Reynolds High School many years ago. I just remember the impact that she had on me and I truly appreciated that.*

*Pat Hefner*

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**Patrick Hefner** - December 22, 2022 at 04:58 PM

TT

*So sorry to hear this such a sweet person ,Jerry was my teacher in graphic arts etc. He also was a good decent man I still think of him from time to time . Condolences to the family. See you again one day.  
Tony Turner*

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**tony turner** - December 23, 2022 at 11:09 AM

JC

*Condolences to the family. Ms.B and Jerry had a great influence on myself, many other teachers, and countless students.*

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**James Carroll** - December 23, 2022 at 12:18 PM

RM

*I would like to express my deepest sympathy to Ms.B's family. You were truly blessed by her life.  
My son, Bobby graduated from A.C. Reynolds in 1980. Over the years he related so many stories about Mr. and Ms. B, and how much he loved them.  
Ms. B always made us feel welcome at her beautiful home on the river. I enjoyed talking with her so much.  
Ms. B will be remembered*

*Bob Miller*

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**Robert Miller** - December 23, 2022 at 03:27 PM