



## Elizabeth Harris

August 14, 1935 - July 25, 2020

Dr. Elizabeth (Libby) Harris, PhD, the quick to laugh, one of a kind, force of nature, and trailblazing scientist, passed peacefully in her in sleep, Saturday morning, July 25.

Libby was a brilliant and energetic woman with many passions and accomplishments, but she would want us to say, first and foremost, that her faith in Jesus Christ was most important, always emphasizing that we are called to love the Lord our God with our heart, soul, strength, and MIND. A command for all humans, not just men.

Elizabeth Forsyth was born Aug 14, 1935, in Kilgore, Texas, to Harris McQueen Forsyth and Helen Louise Goss Forsyth. She grew up on the south side of Fort Worth. As a teenager, she studied piano with great gusto, avoiding household chores which fell to her brother and sister. Her mother's sewing business funded the purchase of her baby grand piano. It is well known, by anyone who knew her, that Libby was easily bored, with little patience for what she deemed as immature behavior. One day she had had enough of high school antics and declared she would be graduating early to attend college. A bold move in 1953, but her father supported her ambitions, always telling her she could be anything she wanted. The importance of his belief in her intellect at a young age was paramount. He and her mother helped her enroll in Texas Wesleyan College, and they began driving her to college. Initially, Libby wanted to major in music but switched to biology. While at TWC, she met a Marine veteran, drinking coffee in the student union—Joseph Wayman Harris. The two eventually eloped on February 16, 1956, to Denton, embarking on a lifetime of love and “argumentative joust,” as Libby called it.

She earned a Master's degree in Biology at TCU and her doctorate at what is now the University of Texas at Southwestern Medical School. The title of her dissertation was “The Genetics of a Small Staphylococcal Phage.” In 1970 she was hired as the very first faculty member of the new Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. She found this opportunity exhilarating! Becoming the founding Chair of TCOM's Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Dean of Admissions, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, she served on the Board of Examiners, and became an Emeritus Professor in 1995. She created a legacy of

professionalism and dedication at UNTHSC and was among the early recipients of the TCOM Founders' Medal. Libby built her stellar career, all while being a caring and fun mom for her four children and a loving wife to Joe. She consistently attributed her achievements to God's gifts to her, and the spirit of Christ empowering her.

In retirement, Libby threw herself full force into her many passions. She had enough interests to fill several lifetimes, and she truly believed she could master each one. Piano, genealogy, travel, biblical history, psychiatry, film music, Shostakovich....you name it. If she found it interesting, she was going to be an expert. Libby often said that her grandchildren were the joys of her life, and she had a special relationship with all 12. Loving each one separately and individually. Her grandchildren loved their unorthodox, fun loving and crazy Grandma and abided by her official motto "Don't Mess with Grandma." Libby did a lot in life, but most will probably remember her by the genuine love and compassion she exuded. She called everyone her friends, including the cashiers at Big Lots. She often brought cookies to Dallas Mavericks games to give to the ushers and ticket takers. One time she brought presents to a woman working in the booth at the American Airlines parking lot to celebrate a new grandchild. She was the center of our family. Our never-ending source of strength, compassion, empathy and comic relief. We will love her forever.

Libby is survived by her sister Carolyn Linton; her brother, Arthur Forsyth and wife Robyn, sister-in-law, Sarah Forsyth-Zipplerlen; her children: Elizabeth Louise Harris Woodruff and husband Kip; Joe Allen Harris, M.D. and wife Liz; Margaret (Meg) Harris Walter, D.O. and husband Jeff, Ph.D.; Heather Forsyth Harris Handloff and husband Sam; Daughter-in-love: Felicia Harris. Grandchildren: Argyle (Christina), Mary-Kate (Shea), Molly, Griffith (Betsy), Claire, Audrey, Jason (Lauren), Stephanie, Braden, Natalie (Markus), Zeke and Dorothy. Great-grandchildren: Alex, Tucker, Landon, Reed, Emmy-Louise, Shelby, Jack and Ella.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Salvation Army, Jubilee Theatre or UNT Health Science Center Foundation, Dr. Elizabeth Harris fund at [www.unthsc.edu/give/give-now](http://www.unthsc.edu/give/give-now) or 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd, EAD 802, Fort Worth, Texas 76107.

Due to the ongoing risks of Covid-19, the family has opted for a small, private ceremony. We hope to have a grand memorial fitting of Elizabeth when it is safe to do so.

The family thanks the staff at Legacy at Bear Creek Assisted Living and Memory Care. Thank you for your hard work and loving care for Libby for the two years. Also, a special thank you to Margie Gillum Fuentes for her many years of love and assistance to Joe and

Libby. You are our family, and we love you.

# Comments

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“ John & Roberta Schrunk lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth Harris



**John & Roberta Schrunk** - October 19, 2020 at 03:32 PM



“ Sorry about your loss. She sounded like an AMAZING person. Remember the WONDERFUL memories!

**John & Roberta Schrunk** - October 19, 2020 at 03:35 PM

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“ I remember the first time I met Mrs. Harris. She was quick witted and told me a story about Dr. Meg Walter. I'm not sure which one of us was tickled more. However, I knew from that moment on that the apple did not fall far from the tree. May her memory live on and never be forgotten.

May peace be with you all. - Tyler Green

**Tyler Green** - August 01, 2020 at 04:50 PM

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“ Oh Meg, what an amazing, beautifully written obituary. I wish I had Had the chance to know your mom. Certainly a brilliant woman, who was ahead of her time. The family genes are good there! I don't see how she had the energy to do everything she did. I know you will miss her terribly, but obviously she is in a much much better place and is celebrating with your dad. I miss you so much down in our corner. Would love to meet you again for coffee someday. Peace and love to your family.

**kathy byrd** - August 01, 2020 at 04:00 PM