

Doris Annette (Cline) Ward(1918 - 2017)



Candler - Doris Annette (Cline) Ward, 99, of Asheville, NC, passed away Friday, December 1, 2017, at Pisgah Valley Retirement Center, Candler, NC. She was born June 28, 1918 in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, the daughter of Carl Gordon and Esther Valerie (Hansenburg) Cline. A graduate of the University of Toronto's Victoria College, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940, she also earned a diploma from the United Church Training School (now the School for Christian Studies on the campus of U.T.). Fluent in French, she also studied for a few months at the bilingual Élié Commercial College in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. After working as a professional deaconess, she became a naturalized U.S. citizen in the 1950s after she married North Carolina native Kenneth B. Ward, and they moved to Buffalo, NY, where their three children were born.

After the family moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan in the early 1960s, she became certified as a professional social worker while working for the State of Michigan. She retired as a supervisor from the Department of Social Services in Allegan County, Michigan, in 1978. She had organized the Ward Publishing Company in Michigan to publish her own writings in the genealogical field, and continued with it following her move to Asheville later that year.

Her work came to the attention of other local genealogy enthusiasts. Together they formed the Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society (obcgs.com) in 1979. Donated books and other materials were gathered, and she was elected as their charter president. She was very proud that the OBCGS library grew from that stack of books in her living room to become the largest, most professional genealogical library in this area.

She was active as a volunteer in the OBCGS for more than 30 years, slowing down as she reached her 90s. Over the course of these years she oversaw many of its programs and projects, the largest of which were the two volumes of the Old Buncombe County Heritage books, for which she was honored with Western Carolina University's 1984 Mountain Heritage Award. She also edited many of the publications produced by the OBCGS over these years. Her volunteerism was honored by the United Way in 1983, the North Carolina Society of Historians in 1995, the Western North Carolina Historical Association in 1999, and she was designated a "GIFT Hero" by WLOS in January 2000.

As technology advanced, Doris was generally at the enthusiastic forefront exploring its potential. As a way of supporting larger quarters for the OBCGS, she and several other members formed the Computer Genealogy Associates as a way of pooling their money to sub-lease space within the Miles Building and purchase an IBM PC. This enabled her to both continue working on her own Ward Publishing projects while ensuring the doors of the OBCGS stayed open. In the early years of this century, when she was in her 80s, she scripted and produced two videos: Buncombe Beginnings: WNC through 1806, and The Fairbanks House Speaks to America. Both of these videos may be viewed on YouTube. Through all these "retirement" years, Doris was also active at Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, teaching and participating in the adult Sunday School classes each week.

In addition to her parents, Doris is pre-deceased by all of her brothers, Robert, James, and Richard Cline; her son, Kenneth Burton Ward, Jr.; and grandsons Richard VanHorn and Brian and Jeffrey Ward of Allegan, MI.

She is survived by her daughters, Valerie (Ward) Anderson (Robert) of Candler, and Jacqueline (Ward) Britton Lopatin (Leonard) of Asheville; her grandchildren, Casey Ward of Ostrander, OH, and Susan (Britton) Steele of Hendersonville, NC; nephews Doug Cline of Ontario, Canada, and Christopher Cline of Philadelphia, PA; and nieces Fran Cullen of Ontario, Canada, and Laurel Ponist of East Lansing, MI.

Graveside services will be held at 1:00 on Wednesday, December 6th, at Lewis Memorial Park, Beaverdam Rd., Asheville. Immediately following the service, the family will receive friends at Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to: Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, 171 Beaverdam Rd., Asheville, NC 28804; or Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society, PO Box 2122, Asheville, NC 28802.

The family would like to thank the entire staff at Pisgah Manor and commend them for the excellent care they gave Doris during her last year. Their kindness and compassion made a hard time much easier and will never be forgotten.

Moore Funeral Home at Forest Lawn is assisting the family. Please visit www.moorefh.net to sign the online guest book.