

Obituary: Sheila Cook

January 29, 2024

Sheila Cook, former first lady of Dallas Baptist University, died Jan. 27 after a brief illness. She was 75. She was born March 6, 1948, to Oscar and Edna Raymer in Louisville, Ky. She received her undergraduate degree from Georgetown College and earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Louisville before beginning her career as a schoolteacher. She met Gary Cook, who was a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and became minister to senior adults at her church, when he attended her Sunday school class. They were married 49 years. After he completed his studies at Southern Seminary, the couple moved to Texas, where he pursued his doctorate at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and she served 18 years as a classroom teacher. At the elementary and middle school level, she spent 14 years with learning disabled students, for two years she taught remedial reading to junior high students, and for another two years, she helped mentally challenged students at the junior high and high school levels. When she was not in her school classroom, she could be found in church, teaching Sunday school, Mission Friends classes, Vacation Bible School or young women's auxiliary groups. She served on pastoral care committees, preschool committees and long-range planning committees, and she was an instrumental accompanist for the preschool choir. After her husband became president of DBU in 1988, she began the DBU Hospitality Committee to welcome DBU newcomers. She hosted numerous receptions, luncheons and showers in the president's home. She also served on the DBU Women's Auxiliary Board, and she was the chairperson of many committees and events. In her later years, she helped to develop and organize the Becoming Women of



Excellence program, designed to encourage and mentor young women at DBU. In recognition for her service, DBU named her an Honorary Alumna, named one of the Colonial Village apartment buildings Sheila Cook Hall in her honor, and presented her an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree. The DBU Women's Auxiliary Board also presented her with the Ruth Award in 1994. "For many of us, Sheila Cook was so much more than just a friend. She was family," current DBU President Adam C. Wright said. "Mrs. Cook became like a second mother to Candice and me throughout our time at DBU. She was a prayer warrior and constant support, and I know that my story is similar for thousands of others who have been touched by her grace, wisdom, generosity and kindness. So many of us would not be what we are today without having had Mrs. Sheila Cook in our lives. She truly epitomized Christ-centered servant leadership." Sheila Cook was an active member of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, where she taught a weekly women's Bible study. She also served as the co-leader of a Bible study at Brother Bill's Helping Hand, a ministry serving the needs in West Dallas, and was a member of the Brother Bill's Helping Hand Women's Council. She served on the advisory board of the Baylor School of Nursing and on the advisory board for the ministry Asha Partners. She is survived by her husband Gary; son David and his wife, Nicole; son Mark and his wife, Shannon; grandchildren Molly, Caleb and Gracie; and her brother, Elwyn Raymer. A memorial service will be held in her honor at 2:30 p.m. on Feb. 3 in Pilgrim Chapel on the DBU campus, preceded by a reception in the Hillcrest Great Hall beginning at 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to the Sheila Cook Endowed Scholarship Fund, Dallas Baptist University, 3000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75211.