

Elsie Gattis Wood

Virginian-Pilot, The (Norfolk, VA)
March 17, 2002

NORFOLK - Elsie Gattis Wood, formerly of Westmont Avenue, passed away March 15, 2002, at the age of 89. Born May 3, 1912, in Raleigh, N.C., she was the daughter of Samantha H. and William A. Gattis, and the widow of Sherwood G. Wood. She was preceded in death by her son, Billy; brother, Howard Gattis; and sister, Virginia Tomcheck. Left to cherish her memory are daughters, Carolyn Boyle and husband Don of Reston, and Elizabeth Bodner and husband Frank of Portsmouth. Mrs. Wood had eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; a sister, Margaret Andrews of Raleigh, N.C.; and several nieces and nephews.

Elsie was known lovingly as Grannie to her extended family and friends and known to be an avid lover of small animals and gardening. She enjoyed a long membership at Christ United Methodist Church, and was a former member of Colonial Avenue Methodist Church. As long as her health permitted, she was active in the United Methodist Women, the Frances Allen Circle, and YAH seniors group. While a resident of Braywood Manor apartments, she was active in resident programs and an active participant of the Braywood Players, who performed for senior citizens and church groups. Elsie will be greatly missed by all who loved and knew her.

A funeral will be conducted at noon Tuesday at Christ United Methodist Church with the Rev. Bruce Carper officiating. Interment to follow at Rosewood Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 3 to 5 p.m. Monday at Smith and Williams Funeral Home, Norfolk Chapel.

John "Jack" Parker Austin, Sr.

News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC)
October 7, 2003

Jack Parker Austin Sr. remained mayor of Four Oaks to the end Saturday, when he died of lung cancer at age 78. Austin attended the Town Council's most recent meeting, in September, where he announced that the town had won a \$200,000 grant to extend water and sewer lines along U.S. 301.

It was a fitting last act for Austin. He said he was inspired to become mayor as a teenager, after watching his father, a Town Council member, break down in tears when a handful of wealthy residents persuaded the town to forgo water and sewer service because it might raise taxes. Providing water and sewer remained Austin's priority when he won his first term in 1954. He was mayor of his hometown for a total of 28 years, including terms in the 1950s and 1960s. He had not suffered a close election since returning to office in 1981.

Austin was passionately frugal with the town's money and always on the hunt for outside help. Under his stewardship, the town paid cash -- \$600,000 -- for its new town hall two years ago, and Austin persuaded a private donor to provide all the desks and chairs.

Austin's father, a dentist by trade, owned a feed store where Austin was working in 1944 when he spotted his future wife crossing the street. The following year, Austin and Cleo Parker eloped in Dillon, S.C., Austin opened a soda shop on Main Street, and the couple had the first of their three children, John Parker Austin Jr.

The soda shop became Austin's Drug Store, where Austin's son and a granddaughter are pharmacists today. Austin also worked as an accountant, owned Cleo's Clothing Store and built houses on the side. One daughter, Jean, works in the accounting office, while the other, Jane, runs the clothing store. In an interview in August, Cleo Austin said her husband was happier working than playing. He couldn't stand fishing, she said, because it required "too much sitting and waiting."

Austin was diagnosed with lung cancer in the spring. He received treatment at Johnston Memorial Hospital in Smithfield but was discharged Friday, according to Town Clerk Amy Dunn-McLamb. He died at home. "He told his wife and children that he was determined to get home to Four Oaks," Dunn-McLamb said.

Dunn-McLamb estimated that 250 to 300 people celebrated Austin's life Monday at a funeral at Four Oaks United Methodist Church, where he had been a member his entire life.

Joseph E. Austin

Dunn Daily Record
Thursday, May 27, 2004

Joe E. Austin, 88, of Four Oaks died Saturday at his home. He was born Feb. 9, 1916, in Johnston County to the late Joseph Henry and Carmen Gattis Austin. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Sandra Austin Penny; and brothers, Wilbur Austin and Jack Austin.

Private funeral services will be held Monday. Burial will be in Four Oaks Cemetery.

Survivors include his wife, Mabel Stanley Austin; a daughter, Phyllis Austin of Brunswick, Maine; sisters, Nancy Hogan and Sarah Austin, both of Winston-Salem; and brothers, Aubrey Austin of Four Oaks and Ed Austin of Raleigh.

A service of Minshew Funeral Home.

Samuel Aubrey Austin

Smithfield Herald

2/8/2005

Samuel Aubrey Austin, 87, of Four Oaks died Friday after a battle with cancer. Born Sept. 16, 1917, in Clayton, Mr. Austin was a son of the late Carmen Gattis and Joseph Henry Austin. He was the widower of Sarah O'Berry Austin.

After returning from World War II, Mr. Austin owned and operated Austin Feed Store in downtown Four Oaks for nearly 60 years. He served on the Johnston County Board of Education, 1951-1957; as chairman of the South Johnston High School Advisory Council, 1969-1976; and as president of the North Carolina Seedsmen's Association, 1967-1968. Mr. Austin had been a member of Four Oaks United Methodist Church since 1930.

The funeral was at 11 a.m. Monday at Four Oaks United Methodist Church. Burial followed in Four Oaks Cemetery.

Surviving are a son, Samuel Aubrey Austin Jr.; a daughter, Patricia Luce; a brother, Edward Heathcliff Austin; two sisters, Sara Young Austin and Carmen "Nancy" Hogan; and two grandchildren.

The family suggests memorial contributions to the Four Oaks United Methodist Church Building Foundation, in care of Elton Prigden Jr., 1977 Black Creek Road, Four Oaks, N.C. 27524.

Virginia Gattis Tomcheck

Virginian-Pilot, The (Norfolk, VA)

April 18, 1997

Virginia Gattis Tomcheck, 73, of the 300 block of Village Drive died Thursday April 17, 1997, in Albemarle Hospital. She was a native of Wake County, N.C., and a retired bookkeeper. She graduated from Broughton High School, attended Business College and was a member of Berea Baptist Church. She was the daughter of the late William and Samantha Holloman Gattis and the widow of LeRoy Julian Tomcheck.

Survivors include two daughters, DeLois Jones of High Point and Joyce Smith of Austin, Texas; son, Waldo "Wally" Clyde Jones Jr. of Richmond; two sisters, Elsie Wood of Norfolk and Margaret Andrews of Raleigh; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral will be conducted at 1 p.m. Saturday in Twiford's Northside Chapel, Elizabeth City, with the Rev. Glenn Greenway. Burial will follow in Westlawn Memorial Park Cemetery. The family will receive friends at the funeral home today from 7 to 8:30 p.m.