



Margaret Elizabeth Lewis

AUG 12, 1923 - OCT 7, 2014



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Funeral Service for Margaret Russell Lewis, born August 12, 1923, will be held on Friday, October 10, 2014, at 11:00 AM at Labby Memorial Funeral Home of DeRidder, LA. Burial will be at Lewis Cemetery, DeRidder, LA. Visitation will be held on Friday morning from 10:15 AM until the time of the service at the funeral home.

The Russell family came to the Yakima Valley in Washington State, from Kentucky in the early 1900's. Everett Russell married Bessie Mathers in 1921. They had five children, all girls. Margaret Elizabeth was the second born in 1923.

Margaret, or Mark, as she liked to be called, went to business school in Seattle and then joined the war effort. She began her civil service job at the Casual Officer's Section in Ft. Lawton, Washington, where she met John Lewis, who was waiting for transportation to the Aleutians. Mark and John were able to develop a wartime romance before and during John's deployments which led to their marriage on October 20, 1944.

After a brief honeymoon, Mark decided to move to DeRidder, Louisiana, and live with her new in-laws, and wait for her new husband to return from his deployment or the end of the war. The story of the changes in personal mores brought about by war was no better exemplified than in John and Mark's story. In the 1940s, only a world war could bring together two people from such divergent backgrounds.

Mark, a girl from the desert, grew to love the swamps, pine woods, and bayous of her new husband's home, as well as the people who lived there. The extended Lewis family was large and well-rooted, but after a while, they accepted Mark as part of the family. Mark became involved in the community getting the police jury to build tennis courts and a swimming pool where she volunteered to teach.

When John returned home safely from the war, they were ready to start their own family. Their first son, John III, was born in August, 1946, and James Russell in September, 1947. Their third son,



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Joseph Mark, would have to wait another thirteen years to join the Lewis family.

Mark began her next job as homemaker and mom. John found work after the war, but not a profession. He decided that he could help others by becoming a doctor of Chiropractic Medicine, and they moved to San Antonio, Texas, to get his degree. Three years later they moved back to DeRidder.

Mark continued to embrace the culture of her new home and became an integral part of the Lewis family and the DeRidder community.

Although Chiropractic medicine was not authorized in Louisiana, the family eked out a living. Then one day, John, came home with the news he was getting into politics.

In a close election, John managed to win the office of State Representative by the slimmest of margins, thirty-two votes. For Mark and the Lewis family the world turned upside-down. Mark's duties as mother and homemaker were still there, but now she also became an important part of her husband's political career. She joined community organizations, hosted innumerable social functions, kept her husband's calendar, and was often intermediary for him with his constituency. She even found time to compete in the Mrs. America contest and win the regional title.

When John died in the middle of his second term the Louisiana House of Representatives and Gov. Jimmy Davis confirmed her in her late husband's office. It was the first time the action had ever been taken in Louisiana history.

In Mark's short tenure she continued to push John's legislation to legalize Chiropractic Medicine in Louisiana, support the Toledo Bend and Bundick's Dam projects and partner new legislation for picture driver license, seatbelts, and literacy. She was included in the "Who's Who of American Women" along with many other awards and honors.

Mark did not run for another term as State Representative, but continued to serve her community of DeRidder, and Beauregard Parish for many years. The Beauregard Police Jury appointed her Director, Beauregard Community Action where she implemented the Head Start program.



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Margaret is survived by her sons, John, James and Joseph; her grandchildren, Jessica, Johnny, Justin, Jonathan, Jordan, Jolie, and her great grandchild, Parker.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Margaret by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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