



## Sara Boercker

June 26, 1934 - July 2, 2017

Former Maconite and graduate of Mercer University, Sara Wood Boercker, died on July 2, 2017. Born June 26, 1934, she died in Bellingham, WA where she lived with her husband Fred Boercker after retirement. Ms. Boercker graduated from A. L. Miller Senior High in 1951 and received a B.A. degree cum laude in Physics and Math from Mercer in 1955. She went on to earn a Master's degree in Physics at the University of Florida where she was a teaching assistant and research associate until 1959, when she accepted a position as assistant professor of Physics at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. After two years as Acting Chairman of the Department of Physics she became Chairman of that Department in 1972. She was a Consultant to the Institute for Energy Analysis at the Oak Ridge Associated Universities for one year, then a research scientist in the Institute for Energy Analysis at Oak Ridge for nine years, retiring in 1987.

A member of Sigma Pi Sigma Honor Society, Ms. Boercker became a Fellow in the Tennessee Academy of Science in 1967 and a Fellow in the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science in 1971. In a national election in 1977 she was elected to a three-year term on the board of the American Association of Physics Teachers. With numerous research papers published under both her maiden name (Sara Wood) and married name (Sara Wood Boercker), her favorite role remained that of classroom Physics teacher, advisor and counselor to the many Physics majors who graduated during her

tenure. Several of her former students now working as physicists came from as far away as California to pay her honor when Austin Peay named a physics laboratory in her honor in 2005.

Ms. Boercker is survived by her husband Fred Boercker and his three children, David Boercker, Ph. D.; Geoffrey Boercker, M.D.; and Martha Boercker VanSuch (all were her former students); her sister Elaine Wood Whitehurst, brother-in-law James M. Whitehurst, and nephews James H. Whitehurst, M.D. and R. Hugh Whitehurst. A private graveside service will take place Saturday, July 22, 2017 near Roanoke, Alabama.

# Tribute Wall

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“*Sorry I'm 6 months late in sending condolences. We didn't know of her death until our Christmas letter to her was returned today. Sara was part of the nuclear research group at the University of Florida when I joined the Physics faculty in 1958. She and her grad student colleagues were very generous in introducing the 'green' assistant professor to UF! During her years at Austin Peay, she sent several outstanding students to UF who completed advanced degrees. Later on, we maintained contact for many years through Oak Ridge National Lab and affiliated institutions. Sincere (late!) sympathy and condolences to the family from Gene and Dinnie Dunnam*

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**F. Eugene Dunnam** - July 02, 2017 at 12:00 AM