

Janis Loper Welmaker

LIVINGSTON -- Janis Loper Welmaker, 86, died on Feb. 13, 2007 in Lufkin. She was born on April 23, 1920 in Italy, Texas, the daughter of Lonnie and Effie Loper. After graduating from high school in Dallas, she attended the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where she received a diploma in christian education. While at the seminary, Janis met Ben H. Welmaker and they were married on Aug. 21, 1940.

After graduation from the seminary, Janis followed Ben to various pastorates including the Central Baptist Church in Livingston. In the spring of 1951, Janis left with Ben for the mission field in Cali, Colombia. Along with several other missionaries, Ben and Janis helped establish the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali. She was instrumental in promoting and training women for Christian service. She served with her husband as a foreign missionary until they returned home in 1979 and then worked with Ben as a pastor's wife for another 21 years primarily in Athens and Livingston. Mrs. Welmaker enjoyed reading and would literally read books by the grocery bag full which she would exchange with her friends. She was known as someone with a wonderful sense of humor who was able to find laughter and happiness in just about any situation.

Janis and Ben moved to the Pinecrest Retirement Community in Lufkin in December of 2000. She received the loving care of many dedicated professionals at Pinecrest who looked after her until the end of her life.

Survivors include her son, Ben H. Welmaker Jr. and wife Donna Welmaker; daughter, Janie McAllister and husband Mark McAllister; daughter, Patricia Abney and husband James Abney; grandsons, Douglas Welmaker and wife Ashley, Wesley Welmaker and David McAllister. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ben H. Welmaker; her brother, L.C. Loper and sister Patty Webster.

Visitation was held Saturday, Feb. 17, 2007 at Cochran Funeral Home in Livingston from noon to 1:30 p.m. A graveside service followed in Forest Hill Cemetery.

The family suggests that donations in memory of Janis Loper Welmaker be sent to the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali, Colombia, c/o the International Mission Board, Box 6767, Richmond, Virginia 23230.