



Iris Rhodes Campbell

February 12, 1940 - November 21, 2017

“She is clothed with strength and dignity and she laughs without fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness.” Proverbs 31: 25-26.

Iris Rhodes Campbell, wife of the late Governor Carroll Ashmore Campbell, Jr. and former first lady of South Carolina, went home to be with the Lord Tuesday, Nov. 21st after a brief illness at her home in Georgetown County.

Mrs. Campbell, 77, and Governor Campbell were married for 46 years before the Governor died of Alzheimer’s disease on December 7, 2005.

She left behind two sons, Carroll Ashmore Campbell III (Heather) and Richard Michael Campbell II (Ruffin), and four grandchildren, Blakeney Herlong Campbell, Michael Rhodes Campbell, Carroll Barrett Campbell and Marie Riley Campbell. In addition, she is survived by two brothers and sister, Larry Jack Rhodes, Jerry Wallace Rhodes and Christie Rhodes Paris (Keith).

Born in Greenville, South Carolina, Mrs. Campbell was the daughter of the late A. T. and Sue Nell Rhodes.

Iris and Carroll married early in life and successfully built small businesses in Greenville before launching into a lifetime of public service that would take

them from the South Carolina House of Representatives and South Carolina Senate, to Washington in the United States House Congress and, ultimately, the Governor's Mansion in 1987.

Mrs. Campbell primarily stayed out of the limelight, using her time to quietly rear two sons and promote and raise money for a multitude of good causes, which focused primarily on two areas. "I felt if I kept my concern to children and families I could be the most effective," she said in an interview.

As First Lady, she devoted much of her time to charities, including the American Cancer Society, the March of Dimes, Carolina Children's Home and Food for Hungry Children. Recognizing the vital importance of quality pediatric care, she served on the Board of Trustees for Richland Memorial Children's Hospital.

When Hurricane Hugo devastated South Carolina, she worked with religious leaders to create the Adopt A Family program, which provided emergency housing for those whose homes had been destroyed. Mrs. Campbell also worked to provide low-income families with smoke detectors through the Get Alarmed South Carolina program. In addition, as a lifelong lover of horses, she worked with WINGS, a therapeutic program for children with disabilities to experience the joy of horseback riding.

After Governor Campbell was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2001 and subsequent to the governor's death, she and her children worked tirelessly to raise awareness and money for Alzheimer's research through the Palmetto Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and the Carroll Campbell Golf Classic tournament. As an Alzheimer's care-giver herself, along with her family, she founded the Carroll Campbell Respite Program. A program which provides caregivers that cannot afford assistance, with individuals that come into the home and provide them with a respite.

In 2006, Mrs. Campbell was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from Francis Marion University.

Mrs. Campbell had a great sense of humor, enjoyed playing golf and loved to dance, particularly shag. In their youth, she and Governor Campbell were state shag champions.

She cherished her time on the South Carolina coast, particularly with her close friends in and around DeBordieu Beach.

Having a deep Christian faith, she attended All Saints Church and was active in the Women of the Word and Pastorates group in the church. The time spent with her Lunch Bunch friends played an important role in her life as well.

As a result of Mrs. Campbell's exceptional example of dedication to faith, home, volunteerism and state, South Carolina is a better place.

Mrs. Campbell is preceded in death by her parents and brother, Wayne Talmage Rhodes.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, November 27th, at All Saints Church on Pawleys Island, South Carolina. Burial will follow at the church cemetery. The family will receive friends 4-6 p.m. Sunday, November 26th at All Saints Church - Acts Building.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association - South Carolina Chapter, 4124 Clemson Blvd. Suite L, Anderson, South Carolina 29621 or All Saints Church, 3560 Kings River Rd., Pawleys Island, South Carolina 29585.

Sign an online guestbook at www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

BM

“ My name is Bennie Morgan,I knew Iris when I was a young boy.Her brother Jerry and I were friends as kids.We had some good times and Iris was always nice to me! I was wondering about Jerry,if He's still living or not? I'm now 82 and fading fast! It would be nice to speak to Him one more time.I also knew Iris was special and Her life certainly reflects that ! Your lives have been blessed.

Bennie Morgan - July 26, 2025 at 11:39 PM

CP

“ Mrs. Iris Campbell will be greatly missed but her warmth, kindness and gentle spirit will be remembered forever. Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.



Charles Perkins, Jeanne Volin, Michael Harrison, Tenesha Ruffin, Kenneth Govans, and rest of your TD family!!!!

Charles Perkins - November 27, 2017 at 10:53 AM

DR

“ My thoughts and prayers to Mrs. Campbell's family and friends. She was a truly class act of a former First Lady and South Carolinian.

DeLinda Ridings - November 27, 2017 at 07:15 AM

GO

“ my sincere condolences to the family of a remarkable former First Lady of SC

GRADY O"NEAL - November 26, 2017 at 11:24 PM

RM

“ *Before I entered the ministry I had the blessing of serving on the staff of Governor Campbell. He was a strong, effective leader. Iris was the stable force behind the scenes, providing much-needed support and encouragement to the leader of our State at a crucial time in our history. South Carolina is indeed a better place because of Iris and Governor Campbell. I thank God for them, and for the opportunity He gave me to be involved in a small way in the great leadership they provided.*

Rev. Rich McLawhorn - November 25, 2017 at 08:27 AM