

Elisabeth Fontaine Darst

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GALVESTON — Elisabeth Fontaine Darst, age 81, passed away Monday, December 29, 2014 at her residence.

Born on New Year's Day, 1933, Lise always said Dr. Eggers delivered her in a tuxedo from the party he had to leave. Parents were Homer (Jack) Darst and Elisabeth Robertson Darst. She grew up in a family where history was very important, whether that be on her father's side, who could trace their time in Texas to the days of the Republic, or her mother's side who were early merchants in Galveston.

Always creative, she graduated Ball High School early, and while she wanted to go to the University of Texas, her mother decided a 16 year-old would be better attending Gulfpark College, the all girls school in Gulfport, Mississippi where she studied art.

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's she pursued a career as an artist with exhibitions not only locally and in Houston, but throughout the state and region, as well as New York City and England. While her work depicted many of the old houses that lined the streets of Galveston in the 1960's, she also was known for still life and abstract work in oil. A very accomplished watercolorist, her work was included recently in a retrospective of Texas Women Artists that was shown in Dallas. Her work is also in the permanent collection of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, whose art collection is known for the documentation of Texas art.

In 1979, she took the position of Museum Curator for the Rosenberg Library and held that position until her retirement in 2004. Throughout that time, she cataloged and properly housed, by museum standards, much of the historic artifacts that had been collected since the opening of the Library building in 1904. While she curated art shows throughout the library, it was probably the history exhibits which she loved the most, as it gave her a chance to research and design a particular story of the rich heritage of the island she loved.

Miss Darst was a member of the Galveston Rotary Club for more than 20 years and was recognized a Paul Harris Fellow. Her attendance at the downtown luncheon was always a bright spot in her week.

After retiring, her favorite past time was munching on a burger with her close friend, Ruth Kempner or convincing her friend, Nonie Thompson she needed a crab trap for the pier at the back of her house after Ike. The last few years she was lucky enough to have numerous friends come by, especially the late Victor Lang, who came by every afternoon, and her friend Robert Evans.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her aunt, Mildred Roberston, and brother, Maury Darst. She is survived by her nephew, Rob Darst, her niece, Catharine Darst Knight and her children.

A memorial service will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church in Galveston, Texas on Friday, January 2, 2015 at 12 Noon with Rev. Susan Kennard officiating and Rabbi Jimmy Kessler as homilist. The family asks that donations be made either to Rosenberg Library or the Galveston Arts Center in memory of Lise.