



Lila May Banks Cockrell

January 19, 1922 - August 29, 2019

The Family mourns the loss of its beloved matriarch, Lila May Banks Cockrell, who passed from this earthly life on August 29, 2019 to return to her Lord in Heaven. The daughter of Robert Bruce Banks and Velma Thompkins, Lila Cockrell was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on January 19, 1922. She graduated from Paschal High School in 1938 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in 1942. She married her true love, Sidney Earl Cockrell, just before he was called to active duty in WWII. Lila received her commission as an Ensign in the Navy and was assigned to the Bureau of Ships in Washington, D.C. where she commanded the company of WAVES judged the “Best Commanded and Performed”. In 1956, Lila and Sid moved to San Antonio, and Lila became an active community leader in civic roles. In 1963, she was elected to the City Council during the period that San Antonio was gearing up for HemisFair. In 1975, she was elected Mayor of San Antonio and served three terms until 1981. She was active in pushing for more diversity in City administrative positions. Lila was proud of having won the legal settlement that brought what would become the Valero Energy Co. to San Antonio, a major contributor to San Antonio’s economic growth and a leader in corporate philanthropy. Lila participated as a delegate in her role as Mayor to visit the People’s Republic of China, Munich, Berlin, Warsaw and Budapest and Japan. In 1989, she hosted Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip of the United Kingdom as well as President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico to San Antonio. She served as Ex-Officio Trustee of the City Water

Board (now SAWS), San Antonio Transit (now VIA) and City Public Service Board (now CPS Energy), and as Chairman of the Fireman's and policemen's Pension Fund Board. She also served as the first President of the Alamo Bowl. After completing her public service, she accepted positions with The San Antonio Museum of Art and later as the President of the San Antonio Parks Foundation, during which time, the Japanese Tea Garden and the Jingu House were restored. She has received many honors, including the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame, Texas Women's Hall of Fame, The Tom Bradley Award for Public Service, the Vanderlinden Award for Public Service, The Woman Who Made a Difference, and most recently The Liz Carpenter book award. A scholarship in her name has been established at SMU by Bruce Bugg. In 2015, the San Antonio Express-News, as part of the celebration of its 150th anniversary, named Cockrell as one of fifty persons considered to be the most influential to San Antonio's growth and development of that era.

By a resolution approved by the City Council, Lila was officially designated "Mayor Emeritus", and the Theatre for the Performing Arts built for HemisFair was renamed The Lila Cockrell Theatre by City Council Action.

Before her death, Lila was able to complete her autobiography, *Love Deeper Than a River*, expressing her embracing love for the family, respect for the radiant people of San Antonio and zest for the joy of a principled life.

Lila Cockrell is the widow of Sidney Earl Cockrell, Jr. and has two daughters: Carol (Mrs. Robert L. Gulley) of San Antonio, Texas, and Cathy (Mrs. John Newton) of Boerne, Texas. She has two grandchildren: Dodge Garman of San Antonio and Annalee Gulley of Houston, Texas.

SERVICES

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Memorial service will be held at 10:00

AM on Thursday, September 5, 2019 at Laurel Heights United Methodist Church, with a Public Tribute to follow at the Lila Cockrell Theatre, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Private interment will be held at Mission Burial Park North. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Lila Cockrell SMU Scholarship at www.giving@smu.edu or Southern Methodist University to the attention of Erin Jones, director of leadership and affinity giving, PO Box 750305, Dallas, TX 75275(In the check memo line write: Lila Cockrell Endowed Scholarship), San Antonio Museum of Art 200 West Jones Avenue San Antonio, Texas 78215, The Greater San Antonio After-School All-Stars 2006 West Commerce Street San Antonio, Texas 78207 or The Winston School San Antonio 8565 Ewing Halsell Drive San Antonio, Texas 78229.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 3. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 349-1414
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Memorial Service

SEP 5. 10:00 AM (CT)

Laurel Heights United Methodist Church
227 W. Woodlawn Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78212

Public Tribute

SEP 5. 2:00 PM (CT)

Lila Cockrell Theatre
900 East Market Street
San Antonio, TX 78205

Tribute Wall

MG

“ *A joyful life of example and of inspiring progress. A saddening farewell for San Antonio and true leadership. Love, Maria Guido and family.*



Maria Guido - December 19, 2019 at 07:04 PM

MG

“ *Dear Family of Lila May Banks Cockrell, my name is Maria Guido, I am a singer-songwriter and visual artist from San Antonio who has always been inspired by the contributions of Lila as a pioneer of Woman Leadership in our city. Although a life of exemplary social contributions leaving behind a legacy of progress and success for San Antonio her physical loss was very saddening. One of my ambitions in life while a teenager was to someday take a picture at her side. Please accept my condolences and Love from my 6 year old precious daughter Fiorina Guido, my love Brazos Guido and myself. Merry Christmas 2019! Laliguido@gmail.com 210-992-3449*

Maria Guido - December 19, 2019 at 07:01 PM

JC

“ *Condolences to all family and friends. I can remember when Ms Cockrell was sub teacher at Horace Mann middle school. RIP...Jim Clark*

Jim Clark - September 13, 2019 at 06:02 PM

WD

“ *My deepest sympathies to the family of former Mayor Cockrell may her memory live on in all of us.*

Wallace Durst - September 06, 2019 at 01:00 AM

MC

“ *My sincere condolences to the family of this wonderful trailblazer who paved the way for many successful women now holding high government positions.*



Mrs S Cortez - September 05, 2019 at 11:17 PM

DH

“ *I am 68 years old and I remember Lila Cockrell and all she accomplished. She also looked a lot like my mother. She was a great lady!*



Debbie Hassler - September 05, 2019 at 11:14 PM

AN

“ *I am 67 yrs old so i am very familiar with all she accomplished!
"GREAT LADY" Condolences to the family. May she RIP! :-)*

Angie - September 05, 2019 at 12:10 PM

PL

“ I was only 13 when Hemisfair started and I can still remember well how exciting it was for me that we had a woman for mayor! When I compiled the first history of the Girl Scouts of San Antonio, I made sure that Madam Mayor was included in our published edition. I found a photo of her with Girl Scouts to celebrate the Bicentennial of our great nation.

Thank you Mayor for all that you have gifted San Antonio with your grace, your love and your legacy of service. Prayers for all who loved this exemplary woman.



Patsy Loven - September 05, 2019 at 11:34 AM

MA

“ Beautiful woman inside and out. Very positive and influential. Glad I had the pleasure of meeting her when I worked at a school where her grandson attended. Always cheerful and witty when picking him up. Will be greatly missed. RIP Mayor Lila Cockrell

Mandy - September 05, 2019 at 10:08 AM

AE

“ My mother, Mabel Jingu Enkoji, found a kindred spirit in working together with Lila at the Japanese Tea Garden. Our family sense our love and deepest condolences to all of you who have known and loved her.

Ann Enkoji - September 04, 2019 at 12:08 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lila May Banks Cockrell.*



September 04, 2019 at 09:28 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lila May Banks Cockrell.*



September 03, 2019 at 08:35 PM



“ *San Antonio has lost a legend.*

- Kenneth Rojas

Kenneth Rojas - September 03, 2019 at 08:10 PM

RP

“ To all the family rest assure that you now have a guardian angel to watch over all of you.
She was really a role model to all of San Antonio. May Peace Be With You.



Ruben R Pena - September 03, 2019 at 12:39 PM

JK

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Joan M. Korte - September 01, 2019 at 01:09 PM



“ My precious Mother, how wonderful you were always. Love love love you gave to us all, a joy for life, a purpose, dignity and honor were your hallmarks. Thank you for your example to all of us, and the knowledge that we will be with you in the Church Triumphant, with Jesus, and Dad, and all our loved ones and friends who have gone before. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, will not perish, but will have everlasting life." -John 3: 16 Love eternal never dies.
xoxoxoxo Cathy Cockrell-Newton

Cathy Cockrell-Newton - August 31, 2019 at 09:27 AM

DG

I am so sorry for your loss. Your mother has inspired me in so many ways. She will always have a special place in my heart. Xoxoxo. Donna Garcia 1pm to 7pm.nnd.

Donna Garcia - September 01, 2019 at 03:24 AM

MI

Your mother was an inspiration, visionary and true leader. She is irreplaceable and will be remembered with love as deep as a river...bless you all...

marcie Ince - September 04, 2019 at 11:03 AM

JH

“ To honor a great Lady who broke barriers for other ladies of Texas to achieve and accomplish other goals. Her voice opened the way for other women’s voices to be heard. San Antonio and TEXAS women do truly honor her legacy.

Janie Danner-Van Hoozer



Janie Danner-Van Hoozer - August 30, 2019 at 06:03 PM

YG

“ My sincerest condolences to the Cockrell Family. My best memory is when Lila got elected mayor. I remember I said you go girl! She was a great mayor. RIP Lila

Yolanda Gonzales - August 30, 2019 at 02:33 PM

KL

“ To the wonderful family and friends of Lila Cockrell...
It was my honour and pleasure to care for your loved one.
May God grant you peace and understanding during this trying time.



Kathleen LaVonne - August 30, 2019 at 10:18 AM

PN

I knew Lila as Carol's Mom. She treated all Carol's friends as her extended family. As we grew up she was a wonderful role model and example of what women could achieve for the betterment of our world. We send our love to all of her family. Peggy Nipper

Peggy A Nipper - August 30, 2019 at 05:50 PM

MK

Mayor Lila truly set the tone, and we will miss her. My first close observation of Mayor Lila's remarkable leadership style was in 1976, when she made a presentation to an all-male board my law firm represented. Of course she succeeded in getting what the city needed--no flash, just polite, intelligent firmness.. She was both an outstanding "first woman" and a friend. My sincere condolences to Cathy and Carol, their families, and to all who loved, admired, and respected the incredible Mayor Lila.

Mary Q. Kelly - August 31, 2019 at 11:32 AM

GS

My most sincere condolences to the Cockrell family at your Great Lady's passing. I was acquainted with your family back in the early 1960's when we were members of Grace Presbyterian Church; Mrs. C. was Sunday School superintendent for a time and I taught a class of sixth-graders - until she relieved me of my duties for failing to closely follow the lesson plan. She was a remarkable lady and a member of the "Greatest Generation" that has had such a profound impact on this wonderful country.
RIP Mrs. C.

Gil Smith, Boerne

Gil Smith - September 01, 2019 at 04:39 PM