



Isabelle Powell

APR 20, 1923 - MAY 18, 2025



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Isabelle Powell

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Dr. Isabelle Elva Reedy Powell, esteemed Professor of Sociology and lifelong educator, passed away peacefully at the age of 102 in Davidson, NC surrounded by family and caregivers. Born April 20, 1923, in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, Isabelle lived a life of profound service to education, her community, and the advancement of peace and social justice.

Isabelle was baptized, confirmed, and later married to David N. Powell at St. Paul's Reformed Church (now St. Paul's UCC) in Milbach, PA. A bright and dedicated student, she graduated from Millcreek Township High School in 1941 and went on to earn her Bachelors of Science from Mansfield State College. Following her graduation, she began her teaching career in Lebanon and Berks counties, Pennsylvania and Guilford county, North Carolina.

Her passion for sociology and family relations led her to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she earned her Doctorate of Philosophy in Family Relations and Sociology in 1973. Her groundbreaking research focused on married teenage parents and spearheaded the creation of a pioneering school program funded by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, in which 54 young women were able to earn their high school diplomas while their children were cared for in the adjoining nursery. While the program was not adopted by the Greensboro City Schools, it did result in a policy change allowing pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers to continue their education in the public schools.

After the completion of her PhD, Isabelle was appointed to teach sociology at Greensboro College, where she became known for her excellence in teaching and commitment to student success. She retired from this position as Professor Emerita in 1991.

A fervent advocate for peace, Isabelle's dedication took her to the Soviet Union to study its culture and participate in the celebration of the 1000th year of Christianity there in 1988. Isabelle led peace initiatives through the National Council of Churches and left a lasting impact through her advocacy for understanding across borders.



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Her many accolades include the Sears-Roebuck Foundation Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award, the Mansfield University Distinguished Educator Award, the North Carolina Sociological Association Award for Distinguished Contributions to Sociology and the Greensboro Jaycees' Outstanding Senior Citizen Award.

Isabelle authored three books: *Social Responses to Death and Dying*, *My Name is Hunter*, and *My Name is Charles*. The latter two are children's books written at ages 99 and 100, respectively. Her work continues to inspire students, educators, and social advocates.

Deeply involved in her community, Isabelle held leadership roles in numerous organizations, including the Triad World Affairs Council, which she founded in 1995. She was a member of the American Association of University Women, Delta Kappa Gamma, Alpha Kappa Delta, the American Sociological Association, and the World Affairs Council in Charlotte. Isabelle was an active member of Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro prior to her move to Davidson, where she joined Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. Committed to family history research, she joined the Fort Dobbs Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and documented many patriots in her family line. Her dedication to peace, family, and community shone through in every aspect of her life.

Isabelle's lifelong love of learning and teaching will forever be remembered, as will the various lessons she taught us, including the importance of marriage and family, being socially and politically active, knowing no stranger, picking just the right pumpkin for Halloween, loving chocolate, and the joy in eating ice cream.

She was married to her beloved husband, David N. Powell, for nearly 60 years. Together, they raised three children and nurtured a growing family.

The family expresses deep appreciation for the love and care provided to Isabelle from the staff at The Pines, Home Instead, Dudley's Home Health, Gaitway of Charlotte, and VIA Health Partners.

Isabelle is survived by her three children, Eric (Eileen), Pam (Richard), and Jean (Brad); seven grandchildren, Aaron (Lupita), Jennifer (Shaun), Whitney (Jared), Jeremy (Lauren), Jaime (Jerry), Cameron (Abby), and Emma; and seven great-grandchildren, Matthew (Lauren), Finn, Fiona, Andrew, Jacob, Charlotte, and Jasper. She is preceded in death by her husband, David; parents,



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Amy and William; siblings, Leon, Henry, William, Jr., Arlene, and Marlin; and great-grandson, Andrew Powell.

Isabelle's legacy of scholarship, activism, and love for her family and community will endure for generations. She will be remembered as a remarkable woman of wisdom, compassion, and unwavering commitment to a better world.

A service will be held at Holy Covenant UCC in Charlotte, NC on Sunday, May 25 at 2PM with a reception to follow. Private graveside service will be held at a later time at the cemetery of St Paul's UCC in Milbach, PA.

On behalf of Isabelle, the family requests that contributions made in her memory be given to her favorite charities:

David Neill Powell Endowment
Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum
PO Box 386
Lake Waccamaw, North Carolina 28450

The Pines at Davidson
Resident's Association Fund
400 Avinger Lane
Davidson, NC 28036

Fort Dobbs Chapter NSDAR
Deborah Haithcox, Chapter Treasurer
P.O. Box 6641
Statesville, NC 28687-6641

Holy Covenant UCC
PO Box 481285
Charlotte, NC 28269

James Funeral Home, of Huntersville, is serving the family and obituary lovingly written by the family.





Events

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Memorial Service

 **Sunday**, May 25, 2025

 2:00 PM ET

 **Holy Covenant United Church of Christ**
3501 W W.T.Harris Blvd., Charlotte NC 28269





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Isabelle.



May 25 at 11:36 AM



Jerri Taylor posted:

It was an honor to be Isabelle's friend for over 30 years. I admired her instantly at our very first meeting and my admiration for her grew even more over the years. I was always in awe at what she could accomplish with her boundless energy, while always maintaining a calming presence. She was intelligent, compassionate, kind, and strong. Whether she was fighting social injustice, signing people up to vote, or simply talking about her love of geraniums or having lunch with the girls, she did it all with style and grace. When I think of her I see her always in a lovely outfit, (perhaps in her favorite blue and yellow), with a statement piece of jewelry that accentuated her pretty white hair and twinkling blues eyes. Just the thought of that brings a smile to my face. And each time we were together, or even just chatting on the phone, she made me feel special, when she was indeed, the special one. The world is definitely a better place for having had her in it. She was a force of nature, a citizen of the world, and most importantly, my dear friend, Isabelle. I will miss her so very much.

May 24 at 1:16 PM



The Acheys, Chillas' S And Mcnaughtons sent an Arrive in Style to the Powell family.



May 23 at 8:40 AM



Tiffany B. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Isabelle.



May 21 at 10:39 AM



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Raymond Tucker posted:

I cherish the time we spent at Hopewell Presbyterian in our Disciple Bible Study classes . She was in at least two of the classes I taught. I always looked forward to hearing her take on the scriptures during the lesson. We sometime had different opinions but always parted with a laugh and respect for each other. She was a classy lady in every way. I thank God that our paths crossed I am the richer for it.

May 20 at 7:34 AM



Leahanne Smith shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I spent 12 hours every other Sunday with Isabelle for 5 years. So it's hard to narrow down to just one particularly special moment with her. There were many! I loved taking her to Vespers which is The Pines at Davidson's monthly church service with communion. She always wanted a pretty shawl to wrap around her after sitting in her wheelchair. We would make our way through the halls and up the elevator to the Davidson Room for the 4PM service. Being with Isabelle always put me in a quiet reverent state anyway. So attending church service with her brought me into a deeper center with God than I have experienced with others. I feel like this centeredness was facilitated by the purity that Isabelle carried. The pure sense of love, care, and admiration for certain things she saw and expressed for me and for others in her life was very centering. I believe the way she saw me has helped me to make better decisions in my life. My own grandmothers have both passed within the past 5 years. To stroll her down the hallways with her white hair both regal and angelic in appearance with her beautiful shawls wrapped over her was very soocial for me. And to spend the special moments with her remembering ways of the past and telling me about it was priceless. I knew I was in a beautiful gifts of moments when I was with Isabelle when I served as one of her beloved trusted caregivers. And I will take her sweetness and all of her ways I experienced with me for the rest of my days.



May 19 at 6:15 PM



Media

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Lehanne Smith shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

May 19 at 6:15 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Isabelle by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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