

Obituary

Martha Louise Esser Bissex, wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and tireless worker in the church, passed away September 11th from natural causes. A Houston native, Martha was born December 5th, 1927. She graduated from Austin High School in Houston's Second Ward and attended Texas Christian University in Fort Worth to study Christian Education, where she met the Reverend Dr. Earl R. Bissex, Jr., to whom she was married for 66 years.

Martha and Earl had a partnership in ministry in The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. She served on many boards at the city, regional, national, and international level. Of particular note was Martha's four-year term on the International Missions Board, her role as Area Moderator of the Coastal Plains Area of the Christian Church, and her service to Church Women United, where she started a childcare center in Baytown. She initiated or contributed to Christian education and church music programs in every church they served, including with the Cypress Creek Christian Church Choir, with which she sang in such venues as Carnegie Hall in New York and Notre-Dame de Paris. In 2011, Earl and Martha received the Kenneth L. Teegarden Award from Brite Divinity School at TCU for outstanding support of Brite's mission to educate women and men for the ministry.

Martha and Earl were called to Texas churches in Ranger, Uvalde, Pecos, Baytown, Abilene, and Houston over a period of 61 years. They enjoyed camping in every state in the continental US and traveled extensively in Europe during their retirement. Martha was an accomplished pianist and teacher, and also enjoyed painting. She collected teddy bears and items that reminded her of their many travels.

Martha was preceded in death by her husband Earl Bissex and her parents Olive and Walter Esser. She is survived by her children Walter Bissex and his wife Tina Shaheen and by Sarah Doty and her husband Rich; grandchildren Faris Bissex, Ramsey Bissex, and Daniel Doty and his wife Leslie; plus, two great grandchildren Grayson Doty and Charlotte Doty.

A memorial service for Martha is being planned for December at Cypress Creek Christian Church in Houston. Once available, the date and time will be included on the website of Klein Funeral Home--Champions, where there is an online guest book. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the "Earl and Martha Bissex Ministerial Scholarship Fund" at Brite Divinity School, TCU Box 298130, Fort Worth, Texas 76129, or at www.brite.edu, specifying the purpose at the time of the donation.