



Celebration of the life of (Martha) Josephine McLester

Jo McLester was going to be ninety. She decided to celebrate this momentous achievement by hosting a birthday party and bridge game at the LABU. She asked Stephanie Young and Linda Wilson to coordinate this affair from the invitations to catering the food. Harmony DBC yielded the date of April 25, 2010 to Jo so that she could have this party close to her actual birth date of April 29th. This was to be a glorious affair. Josephine asked several friends to make specific dishes to be served at her party. She had planned to invite 100 bridge players/friends to this celebration.

Sadly, Josephine passed away on February 15, 2010 from complications resulting from a fall. Her family of origin, members of her bridge family and friends were stunned. (The fall had occurred as Jo was on her way to play bridge!!) Quickly the bridge community came together to plan a celebration in honor of Josephine which would be held on the April 25th date. Pasadena DBC, (where Jo was president until her death) and all of the other clubs within the LABU absorbed the cost of this celebration. Agnes Snowden, Western section Vice-President along with Ida Simms, LABU President oversaw the administrative components of the party and bridge game. Agnes directed and scored the bridge game.

The menu was everything that Jo had selected to be served at her party. Shirley Lee baked turkey wings & dressing. Stephanie Young prepared her signature beef brisket. Mignon Benjamin, as a tribute to Jo, prepared creamed corn and attended the party even tho' it was her own birthday. Linda Wilson prepared a mixed green salad and "sock-it-to-me" cake. Andreda Pruitt prepared the program & her signature Coconut-Pineapple cake.

The program was a testimony to Josephine's life and her love for the game of bridge and the ABA. An obituary prepared by Janet Taylor (for the Orlando Bridge Tournament Souvenir Journal) was read and distributed. Many of the attendees spoke about their relationship with, and fond memories of Jo. One of her earliest friends, Gwen Bishop, recalled her memories of escapades shared with Josephine. Her adopted bridge daughters spoke briefly about their love for and long relationship with Josephine. Representatives of clubs within the LABU spoke in testimony to Jo's love of bridge and her support of all activities related to the game. Over 80 people attended this event.

Her niece, Avis Davis, closed the program. She travelled to be with us from her home in Chicago (by way of her job in New York). She thanked everyone for the care and support that had sustained Josephine over the many years since her move to Pomona, California from Chicago (in 1984). She, too, recalled fond memories of her Aunt Jo, especially as they related to the game of bridge. She thanked everyone involved in preparing for and attending the lovely celebration of the life of Josephine McLester.