

Opal Rhea Swaity

Opal Rhea Swaity passed away peacefully with her loving husband Paul at her side on December 26, 2010 in Victoria, British Columbia. Opal was born June 17, 1923 in Chattanooga, (Red Bank) TN and enjoyed a family-centred childhood. She was valedictorian of the first graduating class of Red Bank High School. In 1946 she was the first recipient of the Scholze Scholarship given by the Chattanooga Music Club. Throughout her life Opal cherished a deep love of music. She graduated from the University of Chattanooga with a BA in music in 1947 and later studied voice at the Julliard School in NYC. Shortly after joining the music faculty of Shorter College in Rome, GA she married Paul Swaity in 1952. Together they travelled throughout Canada and the southern US before settling in NYC where she continued to perform as soloist at churches and civic functions. She joined the New York Philharmonic in 1958 and retired from there in 1983. In 2004 she went with her husband to Victoria, British Columbia.

Opie loved to sing and she continued to share the gift of song even when her health was failing. We cherish those times of listening and joining in. Her gracious spirit remains with us all.

Opal was preceded in death by her parents, Wesley and Clara Rhea; four sisters: Gladys Wallace, Leoma Young, Nina Robbs, and Margueritte Swingle; and her brother, Claude Rhea. She is survived by her husband, Paul Swaity and a sister, Dot Godsey, of Chattanooga. Opal is remembered with love and affection by her many nieces and nephews across the USA and Canada.

A Funeral Service to celebrate her life will be held on Tuesday, January 4, 2011 at 1:00 pm at McCall Bros. Family Chapel, Johnson and Vancouver Streets. In lieu of flowers please donate to the Alzheimer's society in your area. Condolences may be offered to the family at McCall Bros.com.