

April 7, 2019

LP4.7.19.17

Friends for the Preservation of
Historic Landa Park

Rosemarie L. Gregory

Arlene K. Seales

Photo:

Caption: Marie Offerman

Remembering Marie Offerman

Arbor Day in 2018 would have included the legacy bench dedications on Gazebo Island along Spring Run #3 in Landa Park to Bill Schumann and Bill Kolodzie, but the weather interfered; consequently, the dedications were postponed until tomorrow, **Monday, April 8 at 1:00 p.m.** at Gazebo Circle Dr. on Gazebo Island. *(Please Note, in case of inclement weather meet at the Landa Haus.)* Our columns celebrating Bill Schumann and Bill Kolodzie appeared October 21 and November 4, 2018. A legacy bench in memory of our friend, Marie Offerman now too is located on Gazebo Island. It overlooks Landa Lake and will also be dedicated on April 8. As we told Bill Schumann's and Bill Kolodzie's stories, today we share Marie's:

Marie, the daughter of Julius and Wanda Nowotny Streuer, was born May 16, 1922 in New Braunfels into a loving and productive family that also included her aunt, Edna Nowotny (Voigt), and a few years later, her younger sister Jeannette (Felger).

An overview of Marie's life reveals one of contribution, dependability, accomplishment, and family devotion. Her early years were quite wonderful and set the tone for the remainder of her life. It was as though she and Jeannette had two loving mothers Edna as well as Wanda. Among the highlights of growing-up was the fun of the yearly Kindermaskenball. There was taking part in helping to design and construct their costumes. They loved helping to plan and prepare the evening meal that family and friends enjoyed as they gathered at Landa Park for the picnic supper in anticipation of the Kindermaskenball Grand March on the glazed dance floor that encircled the large oak overlooking Landa Lake.

In 1940, Marie graduated from New Braunfels High School. She then attended Texas State College for Women (now Texas Woman's University) majoring in Home Economics and Art. The role models set by her mother, and her Aunt Edna left little doubt that Marie always would chose to do something creative with her talents. Marie enjoyed sharing the following story about her two role models:

An example of Wanda and Edna's ingenuity was displayed when they were still in school. At that time the Edison phonograph became popular. Oh did those two sisters want an Edison and phonograph records. They began to strategize to meet that goal. There was an empty space on the second floor of the Pfeuffer building at the corner of Castell Ave. and San Antonio St. They arranged to lease it for a brief time. They convinced Mr. Sippel, the owner of the local music store, to let them use an Edison and phonograph records that he had in stock. Using the second story floor space and the Edison and records, they gave dance lessons. With the money they made giving the lessons, they paid for the Edison and the records. In the years ahead, Edna went on to become the first woman in New Braunfels to own her own business. Not long afterward Wanda began a hat design business.

Having those examples to follow it's not surprising that Marie did very well at T.S.C.W. and wherever the future might take her. Arriving home for summer break following her sophomore year, Marie met a young Air Force Pilot, Don Offerman, at a dance at Echo Hall. This began a lovely romance that lasted over 64 years. On November 7, 1942 they had an impressive and quite beautiful military wedding at First Protestant Church.

Their first home was in Harlingen, where Don was stationed. Through the years Don's assignments took them to stations in Bermuda, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Germany, and Commerce, Texas where Marie finished her degree at East Texas State University.

The Offermans had 3 children to whom they were completely devoted.

They are Lynne (Michael Byrd), Bette (Michael Spain), and Don (Phylis). As the years went on they delighted in their grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well.

Wherever they were stationed Marie was active in the Officer's Wives Club, the Presbyterian Church, a garden club and frequently other civic organizations in the area.

After Don's retirement from the military, her activities continued at an even greater pace when they settled in Austin. As Don began his work at the Texas Education Agency Marie began a business, Offerman Floral and Interior Decor. She planned flowers and catering for weddings and excelled at interior decorating projects in the area. In addition she continued contributing her time to civic organizations, the church, a garden club, and most importantly, her family.

In 1981 New Braunfels became the Offerman's permanent home. There soon became an awareness among her friends that if you really wanted to get something done successfully, contact Marie. She'll make it happen.

Marie held offices and/or special chairmanships in the following local organizations: Friends for the Preservation of Historic Landa Park, New Braunfels Presbyterian Church, Ferdinand Lindheimer Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, New Braunfels Conservation Society, Gay Forties Club, New Braunfels Garden Club, Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce Airman of the Month, and as a Charter Docent of the Heritage Society's Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture where she and Don filmed the Museum and the Docent presentations.

Her collection of approximately 3,000 cook books was a delight to Marie. These she willed to Texas Woman's University. She utilized her collection in many ways beyond the delicious meals she prepared. The cookbooks were great help when Marie designed the excellent cookbook for the New Braunfels Garden Club. All club members assisted with their favorite

recipes and Marie's friend Florence Brownfield shared her artistic talent by sketching a Texas Wildflower selection to head each chapter.

The cookbook collection was also put to good use when Marie wrote her column, "Marie's Kitchen" for 12 years for the New Braunfels Herald Zeitung. In the column she shared recipes as well as feature articles.

Among Marie's many accomplishments perhaps her favorite was in remembrance of her great-grandfather Peter Nowotny, Sr. and her grandfather Peter Nowotny, Jr. Both served 10 years as the Comal County Sheriff. Marie, with the assistance of her daughter and son-in-law, Lynne and Michael Byrd, collected a photograph of each of the Comal County Sheriffs. They framed each photo noting the years of service as Comal County Sheriff beneath the photo. These are now displayed on the wall in the Sheriff's office.

We miss you Sweet Lady. Thanks for all the good times and the many gifts you gave us.