

Florence King: Lady Dean

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Tuesday morning, February 25, 1958, was a sad day for the citizens of Huntsville, and particularly for those whose lives had been touched by Sam Houston State Teachers College Dean, Mrs. Florence King. This was the day she suffered a heart attack at her home and died.

Mrs. King was born Florence Anderson, October 16, 1898, in Wallis, Texas. She attended Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College in Nacogdoches and received her master's degree from the University of Houston. She also attended Columbia University in New York and the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Florence Anderson married Claude S. King in 1916 and had two children: Claude D. King and Yvonne King Beseda. Mr. King died in 1929.

After teaching in various capacities in Douglas Public Schools, Mrs. King became dean of girls at Baytown Junior High School in 1938. In 1944, she came to Huntsville and assumed the duties of director of girls' dormitories, and in 1946, was named dean of women. She held this position until the time of her death.

Mrs. King was a lady of honor and distinction, a gentle person, and an inspiration to all she met. In an interview with Martha Anne Turner, Mrs. King told her: "I just love people, and I am happiest when I am doing things for them."

Mrs. King was a patron of the arts. She was Patroness of the local Sigma Alpha Iota Chapter, a national music fraternity for women. Girls from this organization were welcome in her home at any time. She attended regularly all activities of the Music Department on campus.

This intensely professional, soft-voiced, gray-haired lady gave dignity to the Administration Building where she officed. Her door was always open to stranger and friend. Her smile, Christian dedication and genuine concern, influenced each person whose life she touched.

At the time of her death, the following statements were released by her contemporaries. Dr. Harmon Lowman, president of the college said: "Dean King will live in the lives of hundreds of students whom she loved and who admired and loved her. Her passing leaves a vacant place in our college family." Mrs. Frances Crawford, director of women's dormitories, said: "Mrs. King was the kindest and most unselfish person that I have ever known."

Dean of Men Truett Creager, made the following statement: "Sam Houston men and women, will be finer and more valuable people all the days of their lives because Mrs. King was their dean of women. Students cannot come under the influence of such a genuine and noble person without becoming better persons themselves. As long as there is a Sam Houston College, the influence of Dean King will be a guiding light."