



IN LOVING MEMORY
OF

Nancy Willis Lewis

MARCH 24, 1937 - MAY 9, 2025



Forever In Our Hearts

Nancy Willis Lewis, age 88, of Davis, NC, passed away on May 9, 2025, at Carteret Health Care.

Nancy was born in Norfolk, Virginia on March 24, 1937, the daughter of Elmer D. Willis and Pearl Smith Willis. Her parents moved back to Williston when she was two years of age. At that time, her father opened a clam processing plant, which furnished all the clams that Heinz Soup Company used in their clam chowder, a community grocery store, and a boat building operation, Willis Brothers, Inc. Nancy grew up playing on the shores of Jarrett Bay and helping in the family business.

Nancy attended her first year of school in a one room school building in Williston that housed five grades. After the first grade, the school closed and she attended Smyrna School and Smyrna High School, graduating in 1955 as valedictorian of her unusual class, in which over half the class members went on to become college graduates.

After high school, she attended East Carolina University and graduated with honors in 1959 with a degree in Home Economics and Science. While in college, she served as a College Marshal, a member of the annual staff, a member of Phi Omicron, represented East Carolina at two National AHEA conventions. Once while attending one of the conventions in Washington, DC, and touring the US Capital, she was asked by a photographer for Life Magazine to pose for a photo with a US Senator the magazine was writing an article on.

After graduation, Nancy taught Home Economics at Smyrna High School and East Carteret High School. With her love of home decorating, fashion, and foods, she inspired many of her students to become the outstanding women they are today.

After ten years of teaching, she stopped to become a full-time mother and joined her husband in his business, Luther Lewis and Son. She worked side by side with her husband and the business grew to include a crab processing plant, shrimp trawlers, and a fish house. In 1989, she started a gourmet crab cake division called "Kitchen of the Sea", which continues today. The crab cakes are sold up and down the East Coast to food service companies, grocery chains, seafood markets, and restaurants.

Nancy was very civic-minded. Over the years, she was a member of the Morehead City Junior Women's Club, the Downtown Revitalization Committee of Morehead City, served many years on the Board of Directors of First Citizens Bank in Beaufort, serving a term as president. She was a charter member of the advisory committee of the Department of Human Ecology at East Carolina University, was a member of the advisory council at East Carteret High School, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Beaufort Historical Society, a charter member of the Carteret General Hospital Foundation, and a founding member of the Down East Council. She and her husband were members of the Coterie Social Club for over thirty years in which she served a term as president.

Nancy was a member of the Davis First Baptist Church and was always willing to serve in different capacities. She was a member of the Ladies Circle, served as president, and hosted many of their Christmas parties at her home.

Nancy was a great hostess and loved entertaining. She planned and directed four family garden weddings in her yard overlooking Core Sound. Nancy was known to have a beautiful yard, with a variety of gorgeous flowers. She loved the annual Smith Family Reunions, which her mother and aunt started. Nancy hosted many of them, as well as dinners and brunches for her many cousins.

Nancy was kind to everyone she met. She was a graceful lady who was not afraid of hard work. Nancy had great compassion for her family and they were her greatest love throughout her life.

Nancy is survived by her son, Chris Piner of Williston; daughter, Gay Mason (Chuck) of Davis; one stepdaughter, Melissa Lewis of Davis; and sister, Beverly Harvey of Beaufort. She is also survived by three grandchildren, Katlyn Lewis (Zack) of Williston, Chandler Mason, and Saylor Mason of Davis; three step-grandchildren, Jamie Johnson, Joey Piner, and Jeremy Piner; one great grandchild, Ella Lewis; and step-great grandchildren, Heidi Piner, Jace Piner, and Sawyer Piner. She is also survived by two sisters-in-law, Joyce Mason and Zelma Willis.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents, Elmer and Pearl Willis; first husband, Dennis Piner; second husband, James Paul Lewis; stepdaughter, Paula Lewis; stepson, Jimmy Lewis; daughter-in-law, Karen Piner; step-grandson, Kenny Paul Johnson; sister-in-law, Jean Lewis; and brothers-in-law, James Harvey, Ronald Earl Mason and Gerald Willis.

Flowers are welcomed or memorials may be made to Davis First Baptist Church, 130 Community Road, Davis, NC 28524.

ARRANGEMENTS BY MUNDEN FUNERAL HOME, MOREHEAD CITY, NC

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Celebration of Life

11 a.m., Saturday, May 17, 2025
First Baptist Church, Davis, NC

Prelude	Emily Nelson
Processional, "Because He Lives"	Congregation # 448
Welcome and Prayer	Reed Jarvis
Scripture	Rev. Rusty Willis
"In The Garden"	Davis First Baptist Men's Choir
Eulogy	Rev. Rusty Willis
"It Is Well With My Soul"	Davis First Baptist Men's Choir
Family Remembrances	Saylor Mason
Special Music, "To Where You Are"	Joey Styron, Emily Nelson
Closing Prayer	Rev. Rusty Willis
Recessional, "When We All Get To Heaven"	Congregation #491

The service will conclude at Salter Family Cemetery.

Pallbearers

* Chandler Mason (Grandson)	Kevin Hansen	Jimmy Harvey
Zack Lewis	Tristan Small	Kenny Styron