

A Loss for Winchester

Hildren Hilton and Annie “Honey” Jordan Allen called each other every morning for years. It was a ritual, won by whichever of the lifelong friends was the first to wake.

But, on Thursday, the phone was quiet. “Miss Honey,” 85, died early Thursday after a battle with aggressive lung cancer.

Hilton sat on Allen’s porch Thursday afternoon, greeting friends and acquaintances as they came to pay their respects to a pillar of the Winchester community.

“Words just don’t do to describe her,” Hilton said. “She didn’t tell anyone she was sick, she wouldn’t have wanted to bother anyone.”

Hilton sat near a marker that designates Allen’s front yard as the gathering place for the neighborhood’s first National Night Out celebration.

Allen, concerned about neighborhood crime, helped start the National Night Out Against Crime campaign and Community Night Watch programs in the Winchester community and around Monroe.

National Night Out in the Winchester community was held in her front lawn every year, where members of the neighborhood would gather to enjoy each other’s company and Allen’s home-cooked meals. Last year, the Monroe Police Department asked her to pose for the cover of the department’s annual bulletin.

“Miss Honey was a great lady who was always supportive of the community and of the police department,” Monroe Police Chief Debra Duncan said. “Monroe will certainly feel her loss and even more as time goes by.”

She believed that the little things counted, friends say.

Ervin L. Hamilton, her caretaker, said Allen would often walk the streets to encourage children to clean up the community.

“She would get out there herself,” Hamilton said. “She would point out trash that needed to be picked up. She cared so much about this community.”

Born in Monroe to Dicey and John Nivens, she attended Winchester School and taught preschool in Union County.

She was known then for driving a yellow bus to pick up the children, and while the



numbers and names of the students grew, friends say the students always took the time to share a hug with Allen whenever she was around.

A close friend, Ruth Haskins, recalled that Allen took children, under her wing, although she had no kids in her home.

“She was a loving person who never met a stranger,” said the Rev. Larry Leak of Friendship Baptist Church. “She sat on her front porch and greeted anyone and everyone. Her house was a friend to all mankind — she had time for us all.”

She was Flag Ranch Baptist Church’s secretary for more than 38 years, performing duties that included organizing official records, making sure all mission trips were funded and overseeing church maintenance. When large church functions took place, she often took requests as to which meals she

would cook and bring.

“She always picked vegetables for families that needed a little bit of food,” Hilton said. “She made trips to local shut-ins all the time. She was always trying to help someone.”

Monroe City Councilman P.E. Bazemore said she was vigilant about informing city leaders of community needs.

“One word to describe Miss Honey would be ‘outstanding,’” Bazemore said. “And that does not even measure up to what she really was. She made sacrifices to help this city and she provided leadership to the city as a whole. This city has lost an outstanding leader.”

Allen’s extended family is arriving later in the week from out of state.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Grier Funeral Services of Monroe.