

FLORENCE KERR DIES AT 85

7/6/75
The Register's Iowa News Service

GRINNELL, Ia. — Mrs. Florence Stewart Kerr, 85, a former Iowan who served in the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, died Sunday in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Kerr was assistant commissioner of the Work Projects Administration (WPA), appointed to the post in 1939 by Relief Director Harry L. Hopkins. Mrs. Kerr, her late husband, Robert, and Hopkins were all 1912 graduates of Grinnell College.

Born in Harrison, Tenn., Mrs. Kerr was graduated from Marshalltown High School and Grinnell College. She later taught English at Grinnell College, where actor Gary Cooper was one of her pupils.

After her government service, she joined Northwest Orient Airlines, serving as director of the women's department, assistant to the president and director of passenger service.

Mrs. Kerr gained a wide reputation as a writer and lecturer on economic and social problems affecting women and children.

A graveside memorial service will be at 10:30 a.m. July 23 at Hazelwood Cemetery in Grinnell, where her ashes and those of her husband, who died in 1957, will be interred.

A daughter preceded her in death. Survivors include a brother, F. Lee Stewart of Waterloo.

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Florence Kerr services here on Wednesday

Graveside memorial services for Mrs. Florence Kerr, who died on July 6, in Washington, D.C., will be held at Hazelwood Cemetery Wednesday, at 10:30 a.m.

Mrs. Kerr was the widow of Robert Y. Kerr, who died in 1957. Services will be conducted by the Rev. Leland W. Mann of the Mayflower Home.

Mrs. Kerr was assistant commissioner of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and was closely associated with the late Harry L. Hopkins in the Franklin D.

Roosevelt administration during the Depression years. Both she and her husband were graduates of Grinnell College.

She is survived by her brother, F. Lee Stewart of Waterloo, Iowa and several nieces and nephews. Friends may call the Smith Funeral Home for additional information.

Florence Kerr, Roosevelt aide, rites July 23

7/6/75

Florence Stewart Kerr, one of the major figures in Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, died in her sleep on July 6 in Washington, D.C., at the age of 85.

A graveside memorial service will be held at Hazelwood Cemetery in Grinnell where the ashes will be buried on July 23 at 10:30 a.m.

Mrs. Kerr, who was assistant commissioner of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), was one of five Grinnell College graduates who held high posts in FDR's administration.

The five included Harry L. Hopkins, who, like Mrs. Kerr, was a member of the Grinnell class of 1912. Hopkins, FDR's closest adviser, headed the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the WPA in Depression years.

The others were Chester Davis, head of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; Paul Appleby, undersecretary of agriculture; and Hallie Flanagan Davis, director of the Federal Theatre Project of the WPA. Of this group, Chester Davis survives.

Born in Harrison, Tenn., June 30, 1890, Mrs. Kerr graduated from Marshalltown High School in 1908. After graduating from Grinnell College, she taught and later became principal at Gladbrook

High School. In 1921, she returned to Grinnell College as a member of the English Department faculty, continuing to teach until 1926 and again from 1931 to 1932.

After serving on the Iowa Governor's Commission for Unemployment Relief, she entered government service, first as Chicago regional director of the Women's Division of the WPA and later in Washington as assistant commissioner of that agency.

For her work in education, government, and social service, she was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by Grinnell College in 1943.

In 1945 she joined Northwest Orient Airlines, serving successively as director of the Women's Department, assistant to the president, and as director of passenger service.

During her long career, Mrs. Kerr gained a wide reputation as a writer and lecturer on the economic and social problems affecting women and children.

After her retirement, she remained active in education, social-service work, and in political life through the Democratic National Committee.

Her husband was Robert Y. Kerr, a member of the Grinnell College class of 1912 who served on the college's Board of Trustees from 1930 to 1938. A writer and editor, Mr. Kerr died in 1957. His ashes will be buried beside his wife's at the

The Grinnell Herald-Register,

service on July 23. Mrs. Kerr was also preceded in death by a daughter and two brothers. Surviving is a brother, F. Lee Stewart of Waterloo, and several nieces and nephews.