

Club Honors Marie Rourk For Support Of Library

BY SUSAN USHER

A woman of vision, generosity and dedication was honored Tuesday by the Long Bay Garden Club for her efforts on behalf of the West Branch of the Brunswick County Library.

Marie Foscoe Rourk is "truly a great lady," noted Dianne Baxley, incoming president of the garden club, as she presented Mrs. Rourk's daughter and namesake, Marie Rourk Harrison, with a plaque from

the club.

It honors Mrs. Rourk for "her leadership, generosity and community service in the establishment of the West Brunswick Branch of the Southport-Brunswick County Library" and will be displayed in the library.

Also, to remind future generations of Mrs. Rourk's civic contributions, the club also planted a purple flowering plum tree in the library yard as

part of its Arbor Week observance.

While neither Mrs. Rourk, now an invalid, or her husband, Dr. Malcolm Henderson Rourk Sr., were able to attend the ceremony, Mrs. Harrison and her husband John (Jack) attended, along with Mrs. Rourk's sister, Clara Foscoe of Maysville. Approximately 40 citizens also attended the ceremony, including Beamon Hewett, mayor of Shallotte.

In the early 1970s, the West library

branch was located on U.S. 17 in the building that now houses Roberta's Florist shop. The library collection was rapidly outgrowing the facility.

"Mrs. Rourk saw a need, and had a vision—a vision for a new library," said Mrs. Baxley.

In 1973 the library's advisory committee, of which Mrs. Rourk was chairman, launched a five-year drive for funds to construct a new building. Members mailed hundreds of letters to civic organizations and private foundations, seeking support. Eventually, county businesses, civic organizations and individuals would donate 40 percent of the project's cost.

Committee members recalled that Mrs. Rourk worked tirelessly throughout the campaign, "ready to do not just her part, but more," whether it meant a trip to Raleigh or going door-to-door, said Mrs. Baxley.

Doors to the new facility, located on land donated by the Rourks, opened on April 26, 1979. The building was formally dedicated on May 20, 1979.

The library drive was one of numerous civic projects for Mrs. Rourk, who served as a president of the Brunswick County Historical Society, was a charter member of Shallotte Presbyterian Church and active supporter of Camp United Methodist Church for many years previously. She led March of Dime fundraising drive and was appointed by the governor to the first board of trustees of Southeastern Community College.

A native of Maysville, she earned a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from Women's College in Greensboro. She was later employed at James Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington as head of the laboratory department and an instructor in the School of Nursing.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

MARIE ROURK HARRISON accepted a plaque from the Long Bay Garden Club Tuesday morning at a ceremony honoring her mother's outstanding efforts on behalf of the West Brunswick library branch. Mrs. Marie Rourk spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for the new library and she and her husband, Dr. M.H. Rourk Sr., donated the site on U.S. 17. Dianne Baxley (background) presented the plaque.



SHALLOTTE MAYOR BEAMON HEWETT and Marie Rourk Harrison share a shovel Tuesday at the West Brunswick branch of the county library. The purple flowering plum tree was planted by the Long Bay Garden Club as a living tribute to Mrs. Harrison's

mother, library patron Mrs. Marie Rourk. With them, from the left, are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mintz, close friends of the Rourks; Clara Foscoe, Mrs. Rourk's sister, and Jack Harrison, her son-in-law.

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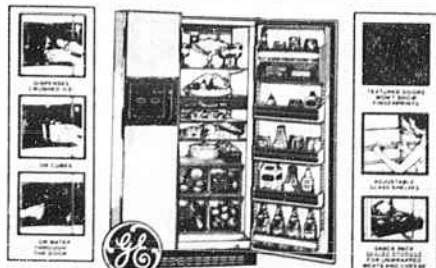
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