

Lucille Laney Ellis Floyd, goddaughter to Laney, dies at 101

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Lucille Laney Ellis Floyd, who died Wednesday at age 101, will be remembered for the profound effect she had on her pupils, her church and the preservation of history in Augusta's black community, those who knew her say.

Lucille Laney Ellis Floyd taught at several Augusta elementary schools and was active at her church.

Floyd, the goddaughter of legendary Augusta educator Lucy Laney, was well known to the staff at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History and never failed to amaze, said Corey Rogers, the museum's staff historian.

Her stories and knowledge of Augusta's history were remarkable, he said, and many times he just listened to her deliver a "steady diet of unbelievable information."

Floyd received her early education from Haines Normal and Industrial Institute, then continued at Paine College and South Carolina State University, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She received her master's degree in early childhood education from Columbia University, making her the first black teacher in the Richmond County school system to hold that degree.

As a teacher at several elementary schools including Silas Floyd, Craig, Gracewood and C.T. Walker, she encouraged pupils to fulfill their potential, often acquiring unused pianos so that talented students could practice. According to her obituary, she was also known for organizing and providing dinners for pupils' families. She taught until 1976 and continued to serve as a substitute teacher for 10 more years.

Floyd was also active at Christ Presbyterian Church, where her father had been pastor. She served as organist and choir director until 1998, and as substitute organist until 2007.

Family members said she was passionate about many things in Augusta and would speak her mind about the issues in either a letter to the editor or by visiting elected officials.

Until recently she would often visit the Laney museum, talking about not only Lucy Laney but also black history in Augusta.

"As long as I can remember her she's been very talkative, engaging and very proud of her lineage," Rogers said.

He said she always represented an “attitude of excellence,” which he knew he would be reminded of each day as he passed the photos of Floyd in the Augusta museum.

She leaves behind two children, four grandchildren and multiple great-grandchildren. W.H. Mays Mortuary was in charge of arrangements.