

In Memoriam: Louise Trotter

1923-2019

by Tracy Thornton

LOUISE L. Trotter, aged ninety-six, of Houston, Texas passed away October 17, 2019 with her loving family by her side. She was born in Port Arthur, Texas on September 4, 1923 to Oren and Grace Lantz. Her dad was known as “Pop” Lantz and was the band director at Thomas Jefferson High School for forty years. Louise, lovingly called “Weezie,” graduated from the same school in 1941 and attended Texas State College for Women (TSCW) in Denton where she studied music. Her father couldn’t afford to buy her a harp when she was twelve, so he visited a harp factory and figured out how to BUILD one for her!

Louise married George P. Trotter in 1942 and they enjoyed a few short months together before he deployed to the army during World War II. When the war was over, he went to work for the Gulf Oil Company for forty years. The Trotters lived happily in Port Arthur, Puerto Rico, Baytown, and Houston until George’s death in 1979. They had three children: Gary, Caryl and Tracy; seven grandchildren: Jessica, Ryan, Ariane, Katie, Stephanie, Carly and Joshua; and five great-grandchildren, all of whom she adored. Louise’s family meant more to her than anything and she kept in close touch with everyone until the end. “One thing about Mother,” says Gary, “if I ever got in a word edgewise in our weekly phone conversations, it was a total surprise!” Louise was a storyteller and loved to spell out all of the details.

Louise learned the art of performing and entertaining at a very early age, but her career really took off after she landed a professional gig playing nightly at the Brownstone Restaurant and the Adam’s Mark Hotel in Houston. During her career she performed with the Baytown Symphony orchestra, and for hundreds of church events, weddings and programs, but was perhaps best-known for her concerts at annual pop and folk harp workshops across the globe. She became an internationally renowned harpist in a career that spanned over seventy years. Friends and



colleagues from around the country continue to reminisce about her famous performances highlighting her country and western arrangements of *Steel Guitar Rag*, *Don’t It Make Your Brown Eyes Blue* and *Chattanooga Choo Choo*. They loved her amusing Willie Nelson impersonation while her family especially enjoyed her versions of *Harvest Moon*, *Summertime* and various boogie-woogie compositions. She was honored with a cover story in *The American Harp Journal* just a few years before her passing and regularly kept in touch with her many friends in the harp community. After producing fourteen compact discs and selling hundreds of harp arrangements online, she retired at age ninety-five but continued playing the piano for the other residents at her home until a week before her death. 