



Esther Ritz Collyer

February 25, 1907 - August 26, 2011

Esther Ritz Collyer, 104, died at the Meadowood Retirement community in Bloomington, Indiana on Friday, August 26, 2011. She was born to Volna E. and Mamie (Gallion) Ritz in Crothersville, Indiana in 1907. She attended elementary and high school in Russiaville, Indiana and graduated from DePauw University in 1928, where she received her BSM. After graduation she taught music and art in the Knightstown, Indiana public schools from 1928 to 1931 where she met a teacher who became her future husband, George S. Collyer. After moving to Ft. Wayne, in 1937, she taught in the Ft. Wayne Community Schools and Allen County school systems before becoming Director of Music and Art in the Allen County (Ft. Wayne) School System (1946-1965). She was National Chairman of the Music Educators ' National Conference and Editor of Indiana Musicator. She also was the first woman to be president of Northern Indiana Bandmasters. In 1960 She served as Chair of the Fine Arts Festival in Ft. Wayne, and in 1973 she was in charge of the dedication ceremonies for the new Center for the Performing Arts in Ft. Wayne - designed by Louis Kahn. After retiring from the school system, she was interim director of the Ft. Wayne Museum of Art, then assistant to the Director for four years. As a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Ft. Wayne, she was a devoted member of the choir. Other volunteer services included serving on the boards of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra and the Fort Wayne Art School. After moving to Bloomington, Indiana, she was a museum docent, a board member of the Indiana University Art Museum, and

a board member of the Friends of Music of the Jacobs School of Music. During this period she was the editor of the Libretto (Opera) Newsletter. She also was children's choir director at the First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington. Besides being survived by a sister, Ruth Rusie of Martinsville; a brother, Eugene Ritz, of Indianapolis; a son, Stanley Collyer, Jr. of Louisville, KY, and many nieces and nephews, she will be sorely missed by the arts community and scores of devoted friends. A memorial service will be held at the First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, Indiana at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, October 22, 2011. For any expressions of condolences you may visit Esthers's site on legacy:<http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/EstherRitzCollyer/homepage.aspx>