

OBITUARIES

GLENNA ROSE HOLLOWAY 1928-2015

Naperville writer led Illinois poetry society

By BOB GOLDSBOROUGH
Chicago Tribune

Glenna Rose Holloway was a past president of the Illinois State Poetry Society and a frequent contributor to several newspapers.

"Her work was so extensive," said Susan T. Moss, current president of the society. "She was a seriously prolific writer. And she was very proper in the best sense, and I think that brought out the best in people and they rose to the occasion."

Holloway, 87, died of mantle cell lymphoma Sept. 4 at Tabor Hills Healthcare Facility in Naperville, said the Rev. Don Niswonger of Grace United Methodist Church of Naperville. Niswonger and his wife, Carol, were longtime friends of Holloway's and the executors of her estate.

Born Glenna Preston in Tennessee, Holloway was married at a young age to Robert Wesley Holloway. He died in 1997.

Robert Holloway was a longtime employee of Sears, which entailed frequent moves around the country. In 1967, the couple moved from Atlanta to Lombard, and then in 1973, they bought a newly built house in Naperville.

Although she never held a full-time job outside the home, she enjoyed several pursuits, including making jewelry. She had her own studio and would sell items made with semiprecious stones, Niswonger said.

Holloway started writing freelance articles for the Tribune in 1985. Over the next 15 years, she contributed travel articles and feature pieces for the paper's



GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Glenna Rose Holloway was a writer and poet.

Tempo Woman and Tempo DuPage sections.

She often didn't veer far from home in finding subject matter, contributing stories about Pfeiffer Hall at North Central College in Naperville, about a retired Navy admiral who found a second career as a volunteer in Naperville, and about a professional caner in Naperville who restored the seats, backs and arms of chairs and settees.

Holloway especially enjoyed profiling artists. And sometimes, she would choose as her article topic a person from Naperville who had gone on to hold interesting jobs elsewhere in the U.S., such as a Naperville native caring for pandas at the San Diego Zoo.

Holloway also wrote articles for the Daily Herald, the Sun-Times and the Naperville Sun.

Holloway also wrote poetry and was the first president of the Illinois State Poetry Society when it was formed in 1991. She contributed poems to dozens of national publications and wrote a meaningful amount

of poetry in her later years, Niswonger said.

"In the last 25 years, I would say, poetry was her passion," he said. "And her command of the English language was incomparable. I've never known anyone with such a command of words."

In 2006, Naperville officials asked Holloway to help the city celebrate its 175th anniversary by contributing lyrics for a song, Niswonger said. In 2009, she was named Illinois' senior poet laureate in the National Senior Poets Laureate poetry competition for people 50 years old and older. Holloway would go on to win the honor again with poems she submitted in 2010, 2012 and 2013.

Chinese poet and Argonne National Laboratory nuclear engineer William Marr, whom Holloway profiled in a February 1996 Tribune article, tapped Holloway to write one of the two forewords to a poetry book of his, "Autumn Window."

In 2009, Holloway self-published a book of her poetry, "Never Far From Water and Other Love Stories."

Holloway's roots helped to inform her demeanor toward others, Niswonger said.

"She was a Southern belle in the best tradition," Niswonger said. "She was always gracious and hospitable, and she spoke with a soft voice and was very compassionate."

There were no immediate survivors.

Services were held.

Bob Goldsborough is a freelance reporter.