



- *Activist*
- *Journalist*

TIMELINE

1897 – Marries Julian LaRose Harris

1914 – Begins writing under pen name for the Herald Syndicate: New York and Paris

1917 – First book, a translation of Romanian folk tales, is published

1918 – Biography of father-in-

Julia Collier Harris

1885–1967

Inducted 1998

Julia Collier Harris was a journalist who had the courage of her convictions. Unfortunately, many of those convictions did not fit the temper of her times and her passionate expression of them led to personal threats, as well as lost advertising and circulation, even sabotage, for the Columbus Enquirer Sun, which published them. They also helped bring the South its first Pulitzer Prize.

Julia Florida Collier was the eldest child of an Atlanta business leader and onetime Mayor. Born in 1875 she showed an early aptitude for art and attended the Cowles Art School in Boston. Plans for an artistic career, however, were shelved after the early deaths of her parents left six minor siblings in her care. She married Julian LaRose Harris in 1897, beginning a sixty-five year union that endured the tragic deaths of their two young sons in 1903 and 04.

Once her siblings grew up her marriage became a professional as well as personal partnership. Julian Harris, the eldest son of literary legend Joel Chandler Harris, was managing editor of the Atlanta Constitution, and his wife soon began contributing lively articles on literature and the arts. Later they launched the Uncle Remus Home Magazine, for which she designed the cover. When her husband became Sunday editor for the New York Herald in 1914, Julia Harris wrote under a pen name for the Herald Syndicate in both New York and Paris, where she

was one of two women

journalists to witness the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Her first book, a translation of Rumanian folk tales, was published in 1917. She also

found time to write the first biography of her famous father-in-law, which the New York Times praised as a

“In an age and section of the country where middle-class women were relegated to a largely domestic role, she demonstrated that a woman could have brains and use them, could carve out a career for herself outside the home, and could take a stand and fight for causes she believed in.”

– Dictionary of Georgia Biography

law Joel Chandler Harris is published

1920 – Purchases Enquirer Sun with husband, assumes role of vice president and editor

1924 – Campaigns against and helps defeat anti-evolution bill

1926 – Wins Pulitzer with husband for work with Enquirer-Sun

1926 – H.L. Mencken presents Maryland flag in recognition of work for religious and journalistic freedoms

1929 – Enquirer Sun is sold

1938 – Retires

1996 – Inducted into Georgia Journalism Hall of Fame

“record in which filial affection never obscures the main object – to show the man as he was, in all the relations of his life and of his art.”

Homesick for the South, the Harrises invested their savings in the purchase of the Columbus Enquirer Sun in 1920. Their newspaper was one of the first in Georgia to identify politicians in the Ku Klux Klan and to publish news of the black community. Mrs. Harris wrote a series of articles that helped defeat an anti-evolution bill in the Georgia legislature, another, highly praised series on the Scopes Trial in Tennessee, and frequent editorials in the paper's outspoken campaigns against the convict lease system, lynching, violence, and the Klan. In 1926 the paper won the Pulitzer Prize for “disinterested and meritorious public service rendered in its brave and energetic fight” for these causes. Julian Harris accepted the honor for his wife as well as himself, giving her, as he termed it, “a very great deal of the credit. ... She is not only vice president of the Enquirer Sun Company, but a fearless associate editor, unyielding in the face of injustice of any kind, and a constant inspiration.”

By the end of the decade financial exigencies forced the Harrises to sell the paper and they returned to Atlanta where Julia Harris wrote for the Constitution, the Chattanooga Times, and numerous other literary and popular periodicals.

When poor health forced her retirement from active newspaper work in 1938 she continued to mentor young journalists until her death in 1967 at the age of 92. A friend remembered her as “fiercely honest, without a hypocritical thought in her head.” She loved the South, which is why she never gave up on her efforts to bring it closer to her conviction of what it should be.

For her considerable professional accomplishments, her gentle, thoughtful integrity, and for having the courage of her convictions, we are pleased to announce the selection of Julia Collier Harris as a 1998 Georgia Woman of Achievement.

Additional Resources

Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Special Collections & Archives

Manuscript Sources For Women's History

Julian LaRose Harris Collection

Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library

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