

Katherine Goodbar

28 August 1920 – 18 July 2014, 93, NSS 5538

Katherine Reid Goodbar passed away peacefully on July 18, 2014, at age 93. She was an award-winning educator and environmental activist whose passion was teaching about Earth and how to protect its resources. She was active in the National Speleological Society, the Richardson Environmental Action League, and the Texas Land Conservancy. She is survived by daughters **Nancy Goodbar Darnell** (Wayne) and **Ellen Goodbar Booth** (Bert); son **Jim Goodbar** (Andrea); six grandchildren; eleven great-grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Horace Blair Goodbar** (1966). A memorial service was held at her beloved Unity Church of Christianity on July 21. Burial was at the Ethician Family Cemetery, a green cemetery in the piney woods of east Texas on Tuesday, July 22.

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Katherine and Blair Goodbar were well-known cavers since 1959. The Goodbars were a caving family in the DFW Grotto. In 1963 Blair was one of the first few to be lowered through the corehole into the newly discovered Laubach Cave, which later became Inner Space Cavern. Katherine and Jim also went there. Many caver gatherings were held at their house. She was Caver of the Month in the February 1964 issue of the *Texas Caver*. She was awarded the Outstanding Earth Science Teacher in Texas in 1982 by the National Association of Geology Teachers. She received the Chevron award for environmental preservation and was interviewed by the Conservation History Association of Texas.

A Tribute to My Mother, Katherine Goodbar

By Jim Goodbar

Katherine Goodbar (NSS 5538) became interested in caving in 1959 after reviewing William Halliday's book "Adventure is Underground". Following a lead in the book she contacted Mrs. Horne, who owned Cave-Without-a-Name. Mrs. Horne gave her the names of some Dallas Fort Worth Grotto cavers who had been doing some downstream exploration. It wasn't long before Katherine was down at Cave-Without-a-Name on a mapping and exploration trip.

Along with the rest of her family: husband Blair (NSS 5537) and three children Nancy (NSS 7816), Ellen (NSS 9395), and Jim (NSS 9715), the Goodbars became regular active participants in the Texas Speleological Association (TSA) and TSA Projects. She and Blair joined the Dallas-Ft. Worth Grotto (DFWG) as founding members in 1960. Always one to be involved, Katherine was the Grotto secretary in 1960 to 1962 and again from 1965 to 1967. She also served four consecutive terms as the Secretary/Treasurer for the Texas Speleological Association (TSA) from 1962-1965. Her fellow officers during those years were Chuck Larsen, Orion Knox, Pete Lindsley, and Carl Kunath. All of them had the highest respect for her as a person and for the faultless performance of her duties as a TSA officer. Katherine was selected as the Caver of the Month in the February 1964 issue of the *Texas Caver*.

Her early years of caving were on survey and photography trips into Mayfield Cave, which later became the Caverns of Sonora, and Laubach Cave that was subsequently developed as Inner Space Cavern. One time on a photo trip to Mayfield Cave (Sonora) she decided not to go with the rest of the group and told them she would just stay where she was and see them when they came back. She said she sat in that same spot for more than an hour and never got bored looking at all the fantastic formations and the quiet calmness that surrounded her.

The Powell's Cave Project was another regularly scheduled adventure along with the county cave surveys. The county cave surveys were a chance to get to know the local ranchers and ask them about caves on their property. It was also a time for Katherine to get to know some of the West Texas women, such as Mrs. Horne and "Granny Mure" in her polk bonnet, and hear their stories of old-time Texas. Trips to Gorman Falls Fishing Camp with the DFWG were a regular part of the family activities they enjoyed. Here the entire family learned to rappel and ascend, explored Gorman Cave and many of the near-by caves and swam in the Colorado River. Her choice for cave food was homemade pemmican, which she made for the whole family.

Ever the gracious entertainer she and Blair often hosted the Grotto Christmas party at their house. With a slide projector and screen designed into the den, it was quite accommodating for a grand time and long nights of slide shows of the last caving trips. When cave safety education was becoming a national issue, Katherine volunteered to play the part of **Horace Stumblefoot** in a DFWG Caving Safety slide presentation made available by the NSS.

Katherine stayed active as a caver after Blair passed away from cancer in 1966, and continued to go on caving trips into her 70s. After retiring from teaching earth science in 1985, she traveled to Spain for the 9th International Congress of Speleology in Barcelona with her daughter Nancy and son Jim. There they visited Grotte Pierre San Martin and other caves in the Pyrenees Mountains and many of the painted caves in southern France. Later that year she joined an Earth Watch expedition to Natural Trap Cave near Armpit, Wyoming where she rappelled the 90 feet into the cave every day despite the availability of a scaffolding with stairs. When visiting her son in New Mexico they would visit the local caves there such as Torgac, Fort Stanton, McKittrick, Endless, Cottonwood, New Cave, Parks Ranch, and many others. Katherine always maintained her interest in the caving world and followed the latest exploration and scientific discoveries with delight into her 90s.

Her love of the earth and all things natural led her into many associated areas. In the 1970s she formed the Richardson Environmental Action League that spearheaded the recycling program, which was

still active in 2014. She was awarded the Outstanding Earth Science Teacher in Texas in 1982 by the National Association of Geology Teachers. She worked with the Texas Nature Conservancy as the director of their Land Stewardship program where she evaluated land acquisitions and wrote management plans for the properties they managed and recruited stewards for them. She received the Chevron award for environmental preservation, and was interviewed by the Conservation History Association of Texas for her work.

She was an inspiration to all for what could be and for the protection of those natural landscapes that held special values both on the surface and inside earth. Katherine passed away peacefully at her home in Dallas, Texas in her 94th year on July 18th, 2014.

Jim Goodbar served as the Bureau of Land Management's Senior Cave and Karst Specialist in Carlsbad, New Mexico, for many years. He was given the NSS Honorary Member Award in 2003, and the Karst Water Institute's KWI Karst Award in 2012.



Katherine as Horace Stumblefoot



Katherine and Blair Goodbar at the entrance to Gorman Cave. Possibly a Pete Lindsley photo.

Compiled by William R. Elliott, Dale Pate, and Jim Goodbar, 2 March 2020.