

Elizabeth Murdaugh, matriarch of Lowcountry dynasty, dies

BY JOHN MONK
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Elizabeth “Libby” Murdaugh, the oldest matriarch of the Murdaugh clan and the mother of disgraced former lawyer and convicted killer Alex Murdaugh, has died.

She “passed away peacefully Tuesday afternoon, March 19,

2024, at her home under hospice care. Arrangements are incomplete at this time, but will be announced soon,” according to an announcement by the Peebles-Rhoden Funeral Home in Hampton.

Elizabeth Murdaugh was the wife of the late Randolph “Handsome” Murdaugh III, who was the third and last in a line of Murdaughs to be solic-

itor, or the elected prosecutor, of the 14th Judicial Circuit, a family line that stretched nearly 90 years. He served from 1986 to 2005.

Elizabeth and Randolph Murdaugh III were married for 60 years. He died in 2021, just days after Paul and Maggie Murdaugh — his grandson and daughter-in-law — were murdered. A jury convicted Alex of

those killings.

Elizabeth Murdaugh was a longtime public school teacher, an honors graduate of Columbia College and a member of the Hampton County school board, journalist-author Michael DeWitt wrote in his book, “Fall of the House of Murdaugh.”

Condolences posted on the funeral home’s internet site included, “She was a lovely person, with a kind and generous spirit. She taught my late sister, Belinda, in the sixth grade - back in 1965, and really made a positive impact on Belinda’s life. It was my true pleasure to know Miss Libby.”

In 1976, Elizabeth Murdaugh and The State newspaper were the subjects of a hoax when a fake obituary for her was telephoned in to The State. The obituary, which was published by The State, said she was the wife of 14th Judicial Circuit Solicitor Randolph Murdaugh III and a civic and church leader. The State published a retraction the following day. The perpetrator was never found.

The Murdaugh women, DeWitt wrote in his book, “avoided public controversy that dogged their men, who practiced law,

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played politics, drank whiskey, joined hunting clubs, made front page news and appreciated an elevated status.”

Her survivors include sons Randolph “Randy” Murdaugh IV, a lawyer in the firm founded by his great grandfather and now

known as Parker Law Group; John Marvin Murdaugh, a farm equipment dealer, and Alex; and a daughter, Lynn Murdaugh Goettee.

Her son Alex, a disbarred lawyer and former member of the family law firm, is now serving two

life sentences in the S.C. Department of Corrections for the murders of his wife, Maggie, and son Paul at their family estate in 2021.

In Alex Murdaugh’s 2023 murder trial, defense testimony was used to support Alex’s alibi that he was visiting his ailing mother at her house, some miles from where Maggie and Paul were murdered. Although ample evidence

showed Alex visited his mother’s house that night, the jury chose to believe the prosecutors’ version of events, in which they asserted Alex both visited his mother’s house and killed his wife and son in the space of about an hour.

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