

Elizabeth Kapp Tyson

Elizabeth Kapp Tyson (May 26th 1912- March 18th 2008) was the head librarian of the Transylvania County library in Brevard, North Carolina from 1944 to 1982. As the librarian she saw a period of expansion for the library going from less than 3000 books in 1944 to over 19,000 items by 1974.¹ Tyson compiled and published a detailed report on Transylvania County and the library system for the North Carolina library association.² The Brevard Chapter of the American Association of University Women awarded her the annual “woman who make a difference award” in 2007 along with two other women working in the library at the time.³

Early Life and Education

Tyson was born on May 26th of 1912, as Elizabeth Featherstone Riley to parents Mary Glen Featherstone Riley and Laurence Holdridge Reily in Macon, Georgia. She graduated from Southwestern University in Memphis and attended George Peabody College for teachers in Nashville, graduating with a degree in library science.⁴

Career

¹ Pettitt, Henry G. “History Of The Transylvania County Library.” *The Transylvania County Library 1912 To 1991 A History Of The Free Library System In Transylvania County Including A Report On The Early Formative Years Of 1944-1975 By Elizabeth Kapp*, Transylvania County Library, Brevard, Nc, 1991, Pp. 5-7.

² Tyson, Elizabeth Kapp. *Transylvania County Report: The Community and the Library*. Transylvania County Library, 1978.

³ Knight, Kate Carleigh. "Three Women Who Made a Difference" *Transylvania Times* [Brevard, NC], 10 May. 2007, p.1.

⁴ Legacy.com. “Elizabeth Tyson Obituary (2013) - Brevard, NC - Moore-Blanchard Funerals & Cremations - Brevard.” *Legacy.Com*, Legacy, 28 Jan. 2013, www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/elizabeth-tyson-obituary?pid=178974791&utm_source=copiedlink&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=obitshare.

Tyson started her career in library working at Shorter College in Rome, GA in 1939.⁵ In 1944 she was asked to be the librarian of the Transylvania County library system so they would qualify for state funding.⁶ After agreeing, she became the librarian of Transylvania County library. She also began book mobile services in Transylvania County starting around 1945 from her personal car.⁷ Tyson was listed in the North Carolina library Association membership list in 1964, in a publication that was sent around the state.⁸ In 1978 Tyson compiled a report on the history of Transylvania County and the library, this report was later used as a basis for another history in 1991 in which the author stated he used

“a report written in 1975 by Librarian Director Elizabeth R. Kapp covering the period from 1944 to 1975. This report is included here and is an excellent, definitive history of the formation period of the Transylvania County Free Library. The dedicated service of this lady will always be remembered by this writer and all who have come to know her over the years.”⁹

On her retirement in 1982, the Board of Trustees commissioned a portrait of her that now hangs behind the circulation desk of the Transylvania County library in Brevard. The portrait is an oil painting by Sarah Sneed. Tyson is pictured holding her favorite book, the “Life of St. Francis

⁵ Legacy.com. “Elizabeth Tyson Obituary (2013) - Brevard, NC - Moore-Blanchard Funerals & Cremations - Brevard.” *Legacy.Com*, Legacy, 28 Jan. 2013, www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/elizabeth-tyson-obituary?pid=178974791&utm_source=copiedlink&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=obitshare.

⁶ Tyson, Elizabeth Kapp. *Transylvania County Report: The Community and the Library*. Transylvania County Library, 1978.

⁷ “Transylvania Heritage Museum on Instagram: Mrs. Elizabeth Kapp Bookmobile Service .” Instagram, Transylvania Heritage Museum, 27 Jan. 2021, www.instagram.com/p/CKj5rmjhYYb/.

⁸ “Alphabetical Directory of Members.” *North Carolina Libraries*. East Carolina U, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.3776/ncl.v22i4>. Summer, 1964, P. 115.

⁹ Pettitt, Henry G. “History Of The Transylvania County Library.” *The Transylvania County Library 1912 To 1991 A History Of The Free Library System In Transylvania County Including A Report On The Early Formative Years Of 1944-1975 By Elizabeth Kapp*, Transylvania County Library, Brevard, Nc, 1991, Pp. 1–16.

of Assisi.”¹⁰ Tyson left 5,000 dollars to library board of trustees upon her retirement to fund staff development. The fund is still active today and aims to “enhance the continuing education and career development opportunities for the Library Staff.”¹¹¹²



Personal Life

On September 5th of 1940 Tyson married her first husband, J. Lehman Kapp.¹³ They moved from Nashville, TN to Brevard, NC.¹⁴ Her first husband, J. Lehman Kapp passed away in 1977. Tyson

¹⁰ “Art Installations at the Transylvania County Library.” *Transylvania County Library*, 28 Mar. 2025, library.transylvaniacounty.org/art-installations-at-the-transylvania-county-library/.

¹¹ “TCL Foundation.” *Transylvania County Library*, 24 July 2025, library.transylvaniacounty.org/foundation/.

¹² Brevard College. “Mar 12: Photojournalist Platon to Lecture.” *Brevard College*, 7 Feb. 2017, brevard.edu/mar-12-photojournalist-platon-to-lecture/.

¹³ “Aug 15, 1940, Page 7 - Winston-Salem Journal at Newspapers.Com.” *Historical Newspapers from 1700s-2000s - Newspapers.Com*, www.newspapers.com/image/933090944/?article=3de3c2bf-3a02-4436-9edf-517c3bf7be1d&focus=0.37339216%2C0.2645369%2C0.49267185%2C0.35834745&xid=3398. Accessed 8 Oct. 2025.

¹⁴ “1950 Federal Census.” Census of Population and Housing, United States Census Bureau, 1950, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/62308/records/146675980?tid=&pid=&queryId=e1b5d81-3a37-46ed-b9f5-3c8791e2d9c4&_phsrc=Mje3&_phstart=successSource. Accessed 19 September 2025.

was remarried in 1983 to J. Douglas Tyson. Tyson's second husband, J. Douglas Tyson passed away in 1987.¹⁵



¹⁵ "Elizabeth Featherstone Reily Kapp Tyson" *Transylvania Times* [Brevard, NC], 24 Mar. 2008, p.23.