

# LUCY BALL OWSLEY



Lucina (Lucy) Emaline Ball was born in Muncie on September 4, 1896, the second child and oldest daughter of Elizabeth Wolfe Brady and Frank Clayton Ball. She grew up in the Minnetrista house (the one that burned in 1967) and attended school in Muncie, graduated from Tudor Hall in 1914, and Mt. Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1916.

Lucy was very busy during the years between her graduation and marriage: she gave numerous parties for engagements, weddings, friends home from school or visiting the area, hosted club meetings, provided and participated in various arts entertainments, and assisted with hosting gatherings and parties given by family and friends. She also spent a great deal of time participating in the activities of the various local organizations to which she belonged:

- Daguerre Club member – a photography club – she exhibited her photography in 1922
- Psi Iota Xi sorority member
- Art Students' League
- Conversation Club
- Town Club – comprised of a group of society persons
- Matinee Musicale
- Muncie Art Association
- Muncie Ad Frolic Club

In 1917 Lucy formed her own Red Cross chapter called the “Minnetrista Circle” and participated in fund-raising efforts for French Relief during WWI.

Lucy's older brother E. Arthur Ball, a WWI veteran, was heavily involved with the American Legion and Lucy often accompanied him and his wife to meetings. It was at the October 1922 convention in New Orleans that Lucy first saw Alvin Owsley while he was campaigning to be National Commander of the Legion. They did not meet then but did so six months later at a dinner her family held for Alvin prior to a speech he gave in Muncie. Following a couple of years of correspondence and brief meetings whenever Alvin was traveling through Indiana, the two were wed May 16, 1925. They were married for 42 years and had three children.



After several years of law practice and dabbling in politics, Alvin decided to seek a diplomatic position and was eventually assigned as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Romania (1933-1935), the Irish Free State (1935-1937), and Denmark (1937-1939). Lucy's duties during this time, while raising their three children, included entertaining other diplomats, their wives, government officials, etc., and appearing at functions with Alvin. All of this involved a lot of planning, preparation, and protocol.

While Alvin was in the diplomatic service, they were afforded the rare opportunity to meet and socialize with many members of Europe's royalty including King Carol II and Queen Marie (mother of Carol II) of Romania, Ex-Queen Elizabeth of Greece, and the Former King Alexander and Queen Marie of Yugoslavia. One of the highlights of their time in Ireland was Lucy's presentation to British King Edward VIII in 1936 just before his abdication.

In 1939 Alvin resigned his post and the family returned to Indiana during the war years and then went back to their Dallas home in 1945. During WWII, Lucy organized the Bundles for Britain civilian relief effort for the state of Indiana, and in 1948 was decorated with the British King's Medal of Service in the Cause of Freedom in recognition of her work.

In Dallas, they were busy with family, society obligations, travel, and philanthropic work. (The foundation she and Alvin established in 1951 is still providing grants for arts, education, and human services in Texas.)

Alvin remained involved in politics, the American Legion, and work for Ball Brothers Company. After Alvin's death in 1967, Lucy continued to travel and be active in a variety of organizations.

Lucy died on November 23, 1990, at age 94 and is buried with Alvin in the Sparkman Hillcrest Memorial Park Cemetery in Dallas.



In 1991, Ball Corporation established the Lucy Ball Owsley Museum of Art Enhancement Fund to help finance permanent collection acquisitions, conservation activities, educational programs and equipment purchases at the Ball State Museum of Art (as it was named at the time). Ball Brothers Foundation provided matching funds for this memorial.

In the introduction to her and a friend's unpublished cookbook, Lucy writes that her parents were giving a party in 1896 for her aunt, Winifred Brady Adams, and that her mother had to withdraw from the party to give birth to Lucy so it seemed being born into the midst of entertaining set the course for her life's purpose. While some may see that as a frivolous way of life, it was actually a very important aspect of the society that she and Alvin were a part of especially during his years as a diplomat. It was a means of making social, business, and political connections not just for them but for others, too. She believed that people should "help their cause along with food and fun".