



THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

1 WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

Distinguished Citizen biography for:

Doris Kelley Barker

b. 1929

Honored as a Distinguished Citizen in 2026

A devoted working mother, accomplished professional, church musician, and community volunteer, Doris Kelley Barker reflects the spirit of pioneering Brunswick women. She is also well-known on Facebook as one of the last vivid storytellers of Brunswick's B&O Railroad boomtown era.

Doris was born on December 18, 1929, to Clara and Vernon Frank Kelley at the Rosemont home of her Uncle Harry and Aunt Cora Anderson. Her delivery required three doctors, including legendary Brunswick physician Dr. J.G.F. Smith.

Because her December birthday made her too young to enter first grade with her peers, Doris attended the one-room Catholic School on West B Street, where seven grades learned together. Tuition was \$7 a month—no small amount during the Great Depression. “I learned a lot because we listened to the other grades being taught,” she recalled. Though her parents were warned she might have to repeat first grade in public school, Doris advanced to second grade at West Brunswick Elementary.



Music was an early gift. Her father bought her first piano for \$50, and she studied with Mary Payne, a Peabody Institute graduate, who taught her the importance of following the singer. That experience shaped her years as pianist at Brunswick's First Baptist and later Knoxville's Faith Baptist Church, where she became known for her beautiful preludes.

At school during World War II, Doris was proud to chip in for \$25 War Bonds. On Monday nights, she and her girlfriends helped make bandages for wounded soldiers at American Legion Post 96. At Brunswick High School, she participated in plays and minstrel shows, which later helped her secure a key role in the 1965 Diamond Jubilee pageant marking Brunswick's 75th anniversary.

Doris first met Charles Wayne Barker at an annual May Day celebration that brought the East and West Brunswick schools together. She remembered him as “the cutest blond, blue-eyed guy” on the playground. Years later, after graduating from Strayer College in Washington, D.C., with training in accounting and secretarial work, she saw him again on the Saturday train home. Wayne, then working at the Washington B&O terminal, offered Doris a ride to her North Delaware Avenue home, and asked her out to the Jefferson Carnival that night.



THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

1 WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

Doris and Wayne were married on November 23, 1950, in an ecumenical wedding at First Methodist Church, with her Baptist pastor, Reverend Leonard Carmack, presiding and Wayne's Methodist pastor, Reverend George Bennett, assisting. Mary Payne played the organ, and Phyllis Roby Morsberger sang. As she walked down the aisle, Dr. Smith stepped forward and said, in effect, that since he had brought her into the world, he would be the first to kiss her as Mrs. Barker. "He kissed me on the cheek," Doris recalled, "and everybody roared."

Doris described herself as "a dedicated employee who showed up for work every day." At 18, after graduating from Strayer, she began working for noted Washington attorney Joseph M. Creed, the general counsel for the American Bakers Association, who often testified before Congress. She assisted him off and on for 13 years. When Wayne served in the Navy during the Korean War, the Barkers moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where Doris chose work over leisure and assisted a prominent boatbuilder as secretary.

After returning to Brunswick, Doris resumed work with Mr. Creed and balanced commuting with motherhood. Following the birth of the Barkers' only son Kevin in 1957, she hired Dot Crum as housekeeper and caregiver. Dot arrived every day at 5 a.m. to make breakfast before Doris's train left for Washington. Through her connections, Doris later helped Dot and her husband Willie secure Social Security benefits.

As Kevin grew older, Doris sought work closer to home. In 1968, she joined the fledgling Eastalco Aluminum Company near Buckeystown and worked for its first president, Charles Schroer. She helped name the company and remained there through its acquisition by Alcoa, retiring in 1986.

Among her contributions to Brunswick, Doris served as secretary of the first library board in the 1960s and as PTA president in the 1970s, advocating for students' rights. She was on the building committee that helped establish Faith Baptist Church in 1980, supporting the vision of Reverend J. Boyd Frank, the father of her future daughter-in-law, Debbie. She has belonged to the Order of the Eastern Star since age 18. In 2023, to honor her 75 years of membership, the Eastern Star of Maryland sent a donation to Doris's church in Myrtle Beach, where she has lived since 2010.

The Barkers previously resided in Daytona Beach, Florida, having moved there after Wayne suffered debilitating strokes in 1983. Thanks to Doris's loving care, Wayne lived until age 91, passing away in 2021. Doris and Wayne built a family that includes Kevin and Debbie, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Reflecting on her long life, Doris said, "I really love my hometown." She credited her parents for sending her to Strayer, Mary Payne for opening doors through music, and her faith for sustaining a full life. "Wayne and I lived a wonderful life," she said, "in the spirit of our fervent belief in Jesus Christ."

The Mayor and Council and the Brunswick History Commission are proud to honor Doris Barker as a Distinguished Citizen of Brunswick, Maryland.