



1990 Inductee
to the
South Carolina
Academy of Authors

Elizabeth Boatwright Coker was born on April 21, 1909 to Purvis and Bessie Boatwright of Darlington, SC. In 1923, still in high school, she was awarded the Skylark Prize from the Charleston Poetry Society for her poem “Noches.” She graduated from St. John’s High School in 1925 and was enrolled at Converse College later that year. In 1928, she was awarded the Carroll Poetry Prize from the Charleston Poetry Society for her poem “Red Moon.” As a senior at Converse, she became editor of the college’s student literary magazine, *The Concept*.

In 1929, Elizabeth Coker graduated from Converse College. Afterward, she moved to New York City, where she met James Lide Coker, III, whose grandfather helped found Coker College in 1908. They were married on September 27, 1930.

During her lifetime, Elizabeth Boatwright Coker produced a multitude of southern historical novels. Her first novel, *Daughter of Strangers* (1950), which received positive reviews, is set on a South Carolina plantation before the Civil War and follows the life of Charlotte as she comes to terms with her African American roots. In 1952, *The Day of the Peacock* was published and tells a story of the more prominent cotton and tobacco plantations in South Carolina. *India Allan* (1953) chronicles the life of India St. Julien, the daughter of a wealthy family in mid- nineteenth century Charleston, SC. *La Belle* (1959) follows Marie Boozer, a pretty, disreputable member of Charleston society, who is rescued from the South by Union troops. *The Grasshopper King* (1981), her last novel, tells of two Confederate outcasts who flee to Mexico.

In 1986 and 1987, Elizabeth Coker received honorary degrees from Converse College and Coker College, respectively. In 1992, she was inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame. She died on September 1, 1993.

- Blake Bolen



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Elizabeth Boatwright Coker