Beth Eleanor Cummings Paschal, of Raleigh, NC, died on February 8, 2009, of complications from pneumonia.

Her husband of 50 years, Dr. George W. Paschal Jr., died in 1995.

She is survived by her sons and their wives and her daughter, Dr. George W. Paschal III and Dell Parker Paschal, Robert Cummings Paschal and Anna Dorsett Paschal, and Laura Huston Paschal; and by her grandchildren, George W. Paschal IV, Laura Adams Paschal, Robert C. Paschal Jr., Anna Lee Paschal, and Andrew Dorsett Paschal.

Born in Lohrville, IA, on June 26, 1917, she was the youngest child of Harry Ross Cummings and Agnes Baird Cummings. There were two sons, Donald Baird (1913-1991) and Richard Huston (1915-1986). She attended high school in Ames, IA, and then entered Iowa State University there as a Textiles and Clothing major. After two years, she switched to Journalism and Home Economics. All four of these fields were to remain active interests throughout her life. She graduated from Iowa State in 1939, with a BS, and a position awaiting her as Associate Editor at The Farm Journal. The job took her to Philadelphia where the magazine was published and where she met her husband-to-be, who practiced in the city after receiving his M.D. from Jefferson Medical College (now Thomas Jefferson University) in 1931. She served as Associate Editor until 1945.

Dr. Paschal spent the war years in Egypt (as chief of the Surgical Service of the 38th General Hospital and Surgical Consultant to the Africa-Middle East Theater). The couple married on December 20, 1944 while he was home on leave; two years later, they moved to Raleigh. Soon Dr. and Mrs. Paschal joined Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, where they remained steadfast members. In the early 1950s, they took the bold step of inviting James Fitzgibbon, one of the gifted architects at the very young School of Design at North Carolina State, to design a house for them. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the first examples of modern architecture to qualify.

Mrs. Paschal was quickly drawn into civic activities. Her Junior League placement at the North Carolina Museum of Art in 1955, more than a year before it opened, developed into a lifetime of service to the Museum and the arts. Although Mrs. Paschal took an interest in just about every aspect of the Museum, education always took top priority. Bringing the Museum into the curriculum of public and private schools was one of her early missions. In 1962, she and the NCMA Curator of Education took the first Museum slide show into a classroom. Ten years after her Museum initiation, she began the first of three terms as President of the North Carolina Art Society, the NCMA’s membership arm. Notably, during the time Mrs. Paschal was President of this statewide art society, Dr. Paschal was President of the North Carolina Medical Society, and together, in 1965, they were named Tar Heels of the Week by the News & Observer.

In 1976, the Museum published A Celebration of Art and Cookery, a cookbook illustrated with works of art in the NCMA collection compiled by Mrs. Paschal in a two-year labor of love. Over the decades, she served the Museum as docent, Board member, fund raiser, volunteer. For a number of years, her role as a trustee centered on her membership on the Works of Art Committee of the Board. Her enlightened commitment and forceful advocacy have been recognized. To cite two accolades: In her honor, the Art Society gave the Museum Sunset (Medusa), a painting by Eugene Berman, in 1974; and in 2006, the