



Alice Adeline Abbitt

March 13, 1946 - January 15, 2026

Alice Adeline Abbitt was born on March 13, 1946, to James and Nicky Abbitt in Tampa, Florida. She died on January 15, 2026, with her partner, Ralph Zimmerman, M.D and loved ones, at her side.

Alice grew up in Bartow with her younger brother, Jimbo, with loving and attentive parents. Her father was in the industrial supply business, and her mother was a homemaker. She talked to her dad every Friday morning at 7:30 from the time she left home for college until his death. Her mother, Nicky, was a gifted cook and artist. She imparted her culinary wisdom and an artistic eye to Alice. Alice graduated from Bartow High School in 1964.

Alice attended Florida State University where she was a member of Chi Omega, an abiding source of pride for her. She majored in elementary education and became a lifelong fan of FSU athletics. After graduating in 1968 she taught kindergarten in Arlington, Virginia, for a year. She returned to Tallahassee where she taught kindergarten for several years at Riley Elementary. She spoke fondly of her teaching career; when she encountered former students in later years they spoke fondly of her. It is hard to imagine a person better suited to introduce impressionable five-year-olds to the wonders of the world than Alice.

After her teaching days, Alice began a career as a real estate agent,

specializing in residential real estate. She partnered with Tish Willis and Fran Ferenchick. If you started as a client, inevitably you wound up as a friend long after the real estate transaction closed. She retired from her busy career in 2020.

In the spring of 1978 Alice met Ralph on a blind date arranged by mutual friends. The rest, as they say, is history. They had a long, fun, glorious, life together. They were a good team, sharing deep interests in cooking, tennis, gatherings with friends, houses, and travel which defined their life together. Their deep and abiding love and commitment to each other was obvious to all who knew them.

Alice and Ralph relished their family role as the fun aunt and uncle to their nieces and younger members of their extended families. They came for visits, for college, gathered for holidays and had fun get away weekends together. Alice and Ralph mentored them in relationships and life just by being themselves. Alice had the honor of becoming a namesake when the youngest daughter of her niece, Sloan Floyd, was born in 2024 and named Alice Adeline Floyd.

Alice was a born optimist. She always chose to think positively about people and look on the bright side of every situation she found herself in. It allowed her to bring a contagious enthusiasm to everything that mattered to her. Enthusiasm breeds engagement and Alice was always up for trying something new – travel to a new spot, cooking a new recipe, hearing about a new topic, meeting new people. She sprinkled her optimism liberally over everyone, making you feel her delight in you. It was her. She was a gift.

Perhaps the defining interest in Alice's life was food – growing it, preparing it, seeking new cuisines, trying out new restaurants. For her food was synonymous with style. She devoured a new issue of Bon Appetit, collected

an impressive number of cookbooks, and considered a trip to the grocery store a treat, especially if it was a new one. Her garden, itself a place of beauty, produced abundant harvests of winter and spring vegetables and flowers. She drew pleasure from just about every hour she spent in the kitchen. Ralph was her equally enthusiastic cook and best eater. Alice was a globalist, cooking cuisines from many different cultures. For many years she organized tail gates before Opening Nights events, tailoring the menu to the performer. Taj Mahal was the headliner for one such event. In keeping with the programmatic theme, a tasty array of Indian food was prepared. Come to find out Taj Mahal was a R&B singer from the Mississippi Delta! Alice was a spirt guide to her friends when it came to food, teaching, cajoling, and ultimately nudging those in her orbit to turn out a good meal themselves. How she could devote so much of her life to cooking and eating while maintaining a trim, lithe figure remains an unsolved mystery.

The other consuming passion of her life was tennis. She loved the game itself, and was a top amateur player on the local, and, once, the national level. She learned to play with a group of friends on the then -usable court at Goodwood. Her cross court forehand and her backhand volley became her best strokes. She played several times a week in local leagues and on USTA teams, and organized weekend tennis trips with Ralph and other couples. Her USTA team travelled extensively to play in tournaments and In 1993 her team represented Florida in the USTA National Championship. Her life in tennis led Alice to many lasting friendships, and hijinks, both on the court and off. Ralph and Alice were also big fans of FSU tennis and closely followed the professional game, seldom missing a match in any of the Grand Slam tournaments.

Alice drew her friends and family to the good things in life – celebrating the seasons with spring picnics, summer cookouts, fall tail gates, winter bonfires. She gathered friends, families, interesting mixes of people, to celebrate

holidays, birthdays, and sometimes, just Friday nights. Her greatest delight was dinner parties – meticulously planned, menu tailored to the event, assignments made to participants, kitchen alight with effort. Alice put equal emphasis on dinner and party. Always begun with cocktails, and often with an activity – tennis, badminton, croquet, board games, predictions, Pictionary, etc. etc. Alarminglly indifferent to ambient temperature, hot or cold, frequently the fete was outside. Never, however, would indifference be shown to lighting. It had to be low and glowing, showing off guests and food to great effect. Her attention to ambience carried over when she dined out. Many a waiter was guided to turn out, turn down, or redirect a light and she was known to supply her own soft lights at some venues. Her efforts induced sometimes hilarious, sometimes thought provoking, but always lively conversation. Alice had the gift of being a good listener. She surrounded herself with people of strong opinions. She enjoyed the back and forth of dinner table debate but guided the conversation with a question or transition to another subject, rather than her own opinion. She liked opinions but not conflict.

Along with Ralph, Alice loved Old Florida. They travelled all over the state, seeking Florida's untouched natural beauty and waterways, and loved vintage accommodations. For her 40th birthday Ralph presented Alice with a circa 1914 beach house on a gorgeous piece of land in Indian Pass. They saw the rustic elegance of the house and location and spent many years restoring it to Alice's vision of what it could be. As Alice used to say, we are in every nail. At both Indian Pass and the lovely home they built in Tallahassee, no opportunity to make a detail of domestic life more beautiful and pleasing to the eye was ever missed.

Much as they cherished their homes and life in Florida, they also had a touch of wanderlust. In addition to the customary European travels and notable trips to Egypt and Africa, Alice and Ralph visited many places in the United States that tourists don't necessarily go. They would strike up a conversation with

whomever they encountered that would rapidly evolve into an acquaintanceship, and the next thing you knew the new friend would be taking them on a factory tour. To learn the ins and outs of how something was made, or grown, or processed was a deeply thrilling experience for both of them. But, of course, food tours were their favorite.

Oh, how we will miss her. Oh, how lucky we are to have had her. Her ashes have been strewn over the historic cemetery in Apalachicola.

In addition to Ralph, Alice is survived by her brother, Jimbo and Beverly Abbitt. Nieces Lee and Jimmy Shaw, grandnieces Collins and Eleanor, Sloan and Patrick Floyd and grandnieces Rainey and Alice, Bill and Ida Carter, Elyse Thompson, and Kathy Tyler. Special recognition and gratitude to Ernestine Hampton for help and care of Alice.

No further plans have been made. Cards and notes are welcome. If you wish to make a donation in Alice's honor, please consider the Leon County Humane Society or Birdsong Nature Center.

Jessie Hill of Bevis Funeral Home (www.bevisfh.com or 850-385-2193) is assisting the Abbitt family with their arrangements.

Tribute Wall

MG

“ I enjoyed getting to know Alice these past few years as she played Mah Jongg with us at Temple Israel. She always had a smile on her face and something pleasant to say. She will be missed! -Mimi Garcia

Mimi Garcia - January 25 at 08:15 AM

BL

“ The Summerlin Institute, Class of 1964 sends its deepest sympathies to the family and friends of our dear classmate. Alice was fun, beautiful, athletic and friendly. I know there's a great reunion going on with other classmates.

Brenda Lang - January 24 at 02:44 PM