



Betty Christine Davis Miller

December 17, 1926 - January 2, 2026

Betty was a remarkable woman with an adventurous and fun-loving spirit. She excelled at making the ordinary feel celebratory and creating special occasions for her friends and family. She never met an obstacle she couldn't wrangle with a clever workaround or sheer determination. Betty enjoyed good food and believed almost any meal could be improved with more mayonnaise. She loved the theater and movies and starred in Victor Nunez's film, "A Circle in the Fire". She was grateful for many wonderful trips with Kent and treasured their memories of the beaches of Florida and the mountains of North Carolina. She was an award-winning poet, a distinguished educator, author, and advocate for children's literature. Betty was always a step ahead of her time and deeply rooted in her values. She was a feminist before the term was popularized and her genuine warmth fueled friendships across generations.

Born in Jarratt, Virginia, the eldest of five, she graduated from The College of William and Mary, where she met her life-long love, Kent Miller, at a Presbyterian church picnic. She later earned a Master's degree from FSU. She devoted her professional life to children, books, and the transformative power of stories. She served as Head of Children's Services for the State Library of Florida, shaping generations of readers and librarians through her vision and advocacy for children's literature. In recognition of her impact, the Florida Library Association established the annual Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award. She also served on the Newbery Award Selection Committee

and taught children's literature at FSU. Books were both her profession and her passion, and words—spoken and written—were among her greatest gifts.

Her commitment to service extended far beyond her professional life. Betty was a founding member of Tallahassee Habitat for Humanity. She fought for equality and inclusion. She believed deeply in dignity, community, and action. She was an Elder and Sunday school teacher at First Presbyterian Church where her faith found expression through teaching, leadership, and care for others.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Kent Miller, and her brother, Dewey Davis. She is survived by her loving children: Ann Riccardi (Greg), Jill Theg (Steve), and Casey Hovick (Ted), her siblings, John Davis (Gloria), Nancy Davis and JoAnne Davis (Michael King) and her sister-in-law, Ann Davis; as well as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren all of whom were a continual source of pride and joy.

Betty will be remembered not only for what she accomplished, but for who she was: a woman of warmth and vision, admired by many and loved deeply by those fortunate enough to know her. Her legacy lives on in libraries and classrooms, in poems and books, in service and faith and the generations of readers, children, family members and friends whose lives she quietly and profoundly enriched. Her life was a testament to the enduring power of education, service and love.

A service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving will be held Saturday, January 17th at 11:00 am at First Presbyterian Church. Donations in her name may be made to Habitat for Humanity or the First Presbyterian Church Preschool. Todd Wahlquist is assisting the family with their arrangements (850-385-2193, www.bevisfh.com).

Previous Events

A service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving

JAN 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Betty Christine Davis Miller.* ”



January 16 at 02:40 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Betty Christine Davis Miller.* ”



January 15 at 05:55 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Betty Christine Davis Miller.* ”



January 13 at 02:55 PM

SB

“ Betty's loving wonderful daughters captured her beautifully with this obituary summary. She was one of the classiest humans I have had the pleasure to know. She listened so deeply...and remembered. She loved her family beyond words and she and Kent created a relationship to be envied. I had the privilege to live in their home during graduate school and always thought of them as my treasured family. She accomplished so much and touched so many lives in the most tender and humane way, never to be forgotten by anyone who knew and loved her. My heart is with Ann, Jill, Casey and their families, and those of us who felt like family through Betty (and Kent).

Sharon Berry

Sharon Berry - January 13 at 01:39 PM

PA

“ A First Pres lady from my childhood, along with Kent and her daughters who ran the aisles of the Sunday School building with me. One day, years later, Kent and I bumped into one another on a walk and he offered me a retreat to their beach cottage. I felt noticed. The time for myself with the quiet beach except when I nearly got their car stuck in the sand en route to the cottage, I didn't know what else to do but rock on the porch and play my harmonica.

When I returned the key to the most reviving time in a long time, Betty asked me why I didn't stay longer! How generous can generosity be?

If I had---these famous words....known she, too, was a children's book lover, I would have been by her side daily. When I read this obituary, I am humbled to make the effort to meet, if not again, my elders.....who fascinate me and who have made significant contributions toward the betterment of children in our world.

To Betty and Kent's daughters, Amen to your Mom, Amen.

love,

Peggy Adair

Peggy Adair - January 11 at 08:23 AM