



## Harriet Mahaffey Wilson Butler

April 8, 1935 - July 3, 2025

Harriet Mahaffey Wilson Butler, 90, passed away peacefully on July 3, 2025, in Tallahassee, FL in the loving presence of her children. She was born on April 8, 1935, in Lacoochee, Florida and spent her childhood years in both Lacoochee and Quincy, Florida.

Harriet graduated from Quincy High School and later, Converse College. In 1957, she married John Wilson, also of Quincy, after “courting” long-distance while both were in college. Harriet supported their young family as a speech teacher at the Atlanta Speech School for the Deaf while John finished medical school. They made Tallahassee their home once John opened his cardiology practice in 1968. Harriet was a devoted mother and wife above all else. She cared for John through several debilitating health issues until he passed away in 2000.

Harriet found love for a second time with Bob Butler. Longtime acquaintances from Quincy, Bob was the best friend of Harriet’s brother Billy since childhood. They were married in 2007, and shared 14 beautiful years together before Bob passed away in 2021. Harriet continued to have a rich relationship with Bob’s extended family; his son Robert and daughter-in-law Heidi provided much love and support as her “in town” family.

Harriet’s faith was the cornerstone of her life. A devoted member of Faith

Presbyterian Church, Wildwood Presbyterian Church, and First Baptist Church of Tallahassee, she served in various ministries and touched countless lives. She led Bible studies for youth, participated in mission trips to Haiti where she taught sewing skills and she ministered to incarcerated individuals in prison outreach throughout the Southeast. Harriet found great joy teaching in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program at First Baptist Church, teaching immigrant families and acting as a “bonus mother” to these countless new friends.

She shared her extensive ESL teaching knowledge by authoring a book on the subject just a few years ago.

Harriet also shared her beautiful spirit through hobbies and activities as she enjoyed playing tennis (well into her seventies!), served on the TCC Board of Trustees, participated in countless bible studies, taught tatting (handmade lace) classes, and organized field trips for her ESL students.

Harriet’s health began to decline in 2023, and she elected to move to The Grove at Canopy assisted living facility where she could continue to connect with others. She maintained her radiant countenance despite mounting physical challenges. Above all, Harriet will be remembered for her sweet and gentle spirit and her beautiful smile, evident even in her last days.

Harriet was preceded in death by her first husband, Dr. John Wilson, and her second husband, Bob Butler; her biological parents James and Wilma Fletcher Mahaffey; siblings Jeanette Mahaffey Clarke and husband Bob, Mary Mahaffey Rollins and husband Neil, Jimmy Mahaffey and wife Helen Claire, Billy Mahaffey and first wife Janis; her adopted parents T.M. and Lottie Suber Cumbie and brother Thomas Cumbie and first wife Jane.

She is lovingly remembered by her children: Ann Wilson Haddon, Becca Wilson Shell, Mary Beth Wilson Paris and husband Frank, and Robert Butler

and wife Heidi. Also near and dear to her heart: Scott Shell, as well as Paul Reeves.

She will continue to be adored by her grandchildren: Hollie Haddon Johnston and husband, Brian, and their son, Henry; Sarah Kate, Andrew, and Julia Haddon; Jack and Allie Shell; Frank III, Wilson, and Mary Grace Paris; also sisters-in-law Susanne Mahaffey and Nesta Cumbie as well as many cherished nieces and nephews.

A service in celebration of Harriet's life will be held on Wednesday, July 9th at 2:00 pm at First Baptist Church on 108 W. College Avenue in Tallahassee. The service will be followed by a light reception at the church; all are welcome. A private family interment service will be held at MeadowWood Memorial Park in Tallahassee.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Lighthouse Children's Home in Tallahassee, or a hospice facility of your choice.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## MeadowWood Memorial Park

700 Timberlane Rd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32312

# Previous Events

## Memorial Celebration

JUL 9. 2:00 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church  
108 W. College Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

## Reception

JUL 9. 2:45 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church  
108 W. College Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

# Tribute Wall

CC

“ *My condolences to the family. I grew up attending Bible study hosted by Mrs. Wilson and she became a great influence to me. Her smile was contagious. She will be forever missed. ❤️ Carrie Smith Cartwright*

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**Carrie Smith Cartwright** - July 09, 2025 at 08:30 AM

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“ *My condolences to the family of Harriet. I enjoyed remembering our mutual connection with Converse College and graduating with deaf education from there. Although she in 1957 and me in 1972. She was a lovely lady both inside and out. Betty Blanton Lewis*

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**Betty Lewis** - July 07, 2025 at 09:48 AM