



## Maryjane Blizzard Thurston

September 6, 1927 - November 2, 2014

Maryjane Blizzard Thurston, 87, of Tallahassee, died Sunday after a long illness.

A native of Philadelphia, she had lived in Tallahassee since 1955. Before moving to Florida, Maryjane taught at secondary schools in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Coatesville, Pennsylvania. She attended Maryville (Tennessee) College before earning bachelor's and master's degrees in home economics at Pennsylvania State University. She received a graduate teaching certificate from Florida State University.

She was an icon in the Leon County Schools, teaching and guiding thousands of elementary school children during her 40-year career in the district. She was widely known for her progressive approach to curriculum design.

Maryjane served as a 2nd and 5th grade teacher, assistant principal for curriculum, and district administrator for elementary school curriculum. She worked at several elementary schools, including Oak Ridge, Bond, Ruediger and Gilchrist. She also served on Fairview Middle School's first administration as its assistant principal when it opened.

Maryjane was one of the first two women in Leon County to serve as an elementary school administrator, serving as assistant principal at Oak Ridge. When Maryjane learned she wasn't earning pay equal to her male counterparts, she challenged the superintendent, who said, "Well, you don't make as much because I figure you wouldn't be doing the same kinds of things the men would do."

Maryjane replied: "I once escorted a sheriff's deputy to a classroom so he could take a fifth-grader into custody. I also stopped an armed student on campus who was planning to shoot a teacher, and I confiscated his pistol. Now, what is it that I wouldn't do?"

After retiring from Leon County Schools in 1998, Maryjane continued to serve as a mentor for first-year elementary school teachers, and volunteering in her grandchildren's classrooms at Gilchrist, Hawks Rise and W.T. Moore.

She was a founding member of Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, serving in numerous volunteer positions and as its interim Director of Christian Education. She served on the Faith Presbyterian Preschool Board of Directors and Presbyterian Women's Circle.

An active member of Alpha Delta Kappa, an international honorary organization of outstanding women educators, Maryjane held several leadership positions and was a founding member of the Fidelis Omicron chapter in Tallahassee. Her favorite role as an ADK sister was "Mother Emeritus" for the ADK Scholarship House on the FSU campus. Maryjane's tender loving care, mentoring and mothering of the young women who lived there earned her the nickname "ADK Grandma."

Throughout her life in Tallahassee, Maryjane generously gave her time and love to many charitable organizations, including the Junior Woman's Club, Brehon Family Services, Leon County Retired Teachers Association, Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science, and the Southern Scholarship Foundation. She was also actively involved in her daughters' organizations, Broken Hearts of Florida and The Compassionate Friends/Tallahassee Chapter.

She was preceded in death by her husband, George Thurston III, her grandson, Jonathan Barch, her brother and sister-in-law, Samuel and Harriett Blizzard, and her brother, Robert Blizzard. She is survived by her four children and their spouses: Becky and Doug Barch, Tallahassee; Lee and Eydie Thurston, Tallahassee; Bob and Linda Thurston, Woodbridge, VA; and Karen and Joaquin Chavez, Tallahassee; seven grandchildren: Diane Crim and her

husband, Russell, Virginia Beach, VA; Paul Thurston, Seattle, WA, and Lauren Thurston, Tallahassee; James and Eric Thurston, Woodbridge, VA; and Martin and William Chavez, Tallahassee; and three great-grandchildren: Russell and Ava Crim, Virginia Beach, VA; and Auroralei Thurston, Woodbridge, VA; her sister-in-law, Dee Blizzard, Denver, CO; and six nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday in the Fellowship Hall of Faith Presbyterian Church, 2200 N. Meridian Road, Tallahassee. A graveside service will follow at Oakland Cemetery on Bronough Street at Fourth Avenue in Tallahassee. Maryjane wanted people to come as they are.

In lieu of flowers, Maryjane requested donations be made to one or both of the following: The Com[passionate Friends/Tallahassee Chapter, 6228 Hines Hill Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32312 or [www.tcftally.org](http://www.tcftally.org) or Broken Hearts of Florida, PO Box 180423, Tallahassee, FL 32318 or [brokenheartsflorida.org](http://brokenheartsflorida.org).

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

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

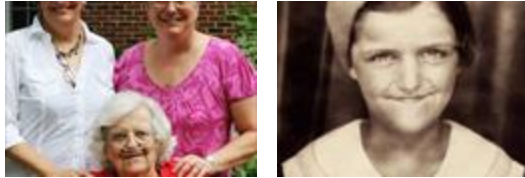
NOV 6. 3:30 PM (ET)

Oakland Cemetery  
838 N Bronough St  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

# Tribute Wall

BB

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



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**Becky Barch** - November 05, 2014 at 02:00 AM

BB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Becky Barch** - November 05, 2014 at 01:54 AM

BB

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Becky Barch** - November 05, 2014 at 01:42 AM