



*Elisabeth Crawford*  
*(Betty) Ervin*

**May 15, 1928 - Sept. 8, 2021**

Elisabeth Crawford (Betty) Ervin died at Grace Ridge on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, after a life well-lived.

Betty was born on May 15, 1928, in Charlotte to Robert Taylor Crawford and Elisabeth Fore Crawford. Although the family moved frequently during her early years, she always considered Charlotte her childhood home. After completing high school in Roanoke, Virginia, Betty attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (then Woman's College), earning an A.B. in 1950. Upon graduating from college, Betty served as Assistant to the Dean of Students at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, until 1952, when she married Samuel J. Ervin, III, and moved to Morganton, where she lived for the rest of her life.

From 1953 until 1955, Betty taught at the North Carolina School for the Deaf. After taking time away from the workforce to raise her four children (she once said of television that anything that could keep four children quiet for an hour couldn't be all bad), Betty resumed her career in education, teaching social studies at Morganton High School and Freedom High School from 1971 until 1985, during which time she taught the first Advanced Placement history course in Burke County. While at Freedom, Betty was the sponsor for the CLOSEUP Program, which provided educational trips that allowed students to meet with governmental leaders in Raleigh and Washington, and worked with the American Field Service, an international

exchange student program.

Betty also played an active role in North Carolina higher education. She was deeply involved in the UNC-G alumni association, serving on that organization's board of directors from 1987 until 1990 and as its president in 1990. She was a member of UNC-G board of trustees from 1994 until 2000 and chaired the board during 1999-2000. In addition, she served on the board of trustees at Sam's alma mater, Davidson College.

In addition to supporting her husband's lengthy career in public service, Betty dedicated herself to the life of her community. She served on the Morganton Board of Education from 1964 until 1967, during which time she supported the decision to desegregate the City's schools and was involved in planning for the consolidation of the Morganton, Glen Alpine, and Burke County school systems. Betty served on the Morganton Zoning Board of Adjustment, including a stint as its chair; the City of Morganton Historic Properties Commission; and the Western Piedmont Community College 2001 Task Force. For many years, Betty was the Registrar or an Elections Judge for Morganton No. 5 precinct. After her retirement, she participated in the activities of numerous local charitable organizations, such as the American Field Service, the Pilot Club, the Burke County United Christian Ministries, and Hospice of Burke County, having served as the president of all four organizations. Betty was very active in the First Presbyterian Church of Morganton, where she sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, volunteered as a youth advisor, served as president of the Women of the Church, and was a member of two different pulpit nominating committees (chairing one). Betty was the first woman to serve as the chair of the church's Board of Deacons and was one of the first women to serve the church as a ruling elder. In the wider Presbyterian denomination, Betty was a member of the presbytery's New Church Development Task Force and the board of directors for the national Presbyterian Historical Society.

Throughout her life, Betty was a force of nature who sought to leave the world better than she found it. Betty was troubled by the injustices that she saw around her and tried to do something about them. She went out of her way to help young people who needed a helping hand and made it possible for a number of them to obtain further education or to otherwise succeed in life. She worked hard to ensure that

Further education or to otherwise succeed in life. She worked hard to ensure that women took their rightful places in the leadership of her church, her community, and her state and nation. She impressed upon her children the dignity of all people, the critical role of life-long education, the importance of involvement in one's community,

and the necessity for knowledge of and contact with the wider world. Although Betty later enjoyed traveling to destinations all over the globe, she made sure that each of her children had the benefit of foreign travel before going abroad herself. She greatly enjoyed spending time with her many friends at her beloved beach house outside Wilmington and was privileged to help raise an entire generation of Ervins, Crawfords, Sassers, Pattons, Smiths, and Lachots on Woodside Place and during annual trips to the beach. More recently, Betty enjoyed visits from her canine friends, Poppy and Sadie. Betty doted upon her husband, her children, her grandchildren, and, more recently, her great-grandchildren, and the other members of her extended family.

Betty was predeceased by her husband; her parents; her brother, Robert Taylor Crawford; and her in-laws, Sam J. Ervin, Jr., and Margaret Bell Ervin. She is survived by her children: Samuel James Ervin, IV (Mary); Elisabeth Fore Ervin (Ken Razza); Robert Crawford Ervin (Dana); and Margaret Ervin Bruder (Joachim); grandchildren Davin Patrick Coutu, Kelly Stephen Coutu (Amanda), Samuel James Ervin, V (Kaya), Michael Worth Ervin, Cameron Virginia Ervin, Caroline Elisabeth Ervin, Valentin Joachim Bruder, and Samuel Wilson Bruder; and great-grandchildren, Elise Madeline Coutu and Cedar Everett Ervin.

The family is grateful to the many caregivers who provided assistance to Betty in recent years, including Dr. Martin Gessner and the staff at Grace Ridge, who provided her with loving care during her final years on this earth and became her friends as well as her caregivers.

A graveside service will be held at Forest Hills Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 11, 2021, with the Rev. Beth Ann Miller, presiding. Memorial contributions may be made to the Betty Crawford Ervin Fellowship in History at UNC Greensboro, PO Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170 or the Taiwanese ministry of John McCall (contributions should be sent to Presbyterian Church USA, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15269 and designated for John McCall, E200487).

The service will be live-streamed beginning at 11 a.m. on the Facebook page for Sossoman Funeral Home ([www.facebook.com/sossomanfh](http://www.facebook.com/sossomanfh)).

# Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.