



Joyce C. Keels

Jan. 25, 1932 - March 28, 2024

Joyce C. Keels, 92, of Morganton, NC passed peacefully on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at Grace Ridge Retirement Community with her family by her side. She was born on January 25, 1932 in Candler County GA to the late James Cannady and Hattie Durden Cannady. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Harold Cannady and Bobbie Cannady; sister, Gloria C. Coker; sisters-in-law, Sylvia and Adele; and brother-in-law, Ralph. Joyce is survived by her husband of 70 years, Dr. Cameron H Keels, Jr.; children, Dr. Martha Ann Keels (Dr. Dennis A. Clements) and Cameron Keels Austin (John Harper); grandchildren, Dr. Gillian Clements (Ben Elgin), Morgan Duquette (Bryan), Dr. Meredith Waldon (Chris) and Sarah Alonso (Kyle); great-grandchildren, Stella Popescul, Alexander Popescul, Bayley Duquette, Marshall Duquette, Hugo Waldon, Freddie Waldon and Oscar Waldon.

Joyce graduated with a bachelor's degree with honors in business administration from the University of Georgia, where she was a member of the student council, the general council, the school publication staff, and a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. After graduation, she was a financial analyst at Citizens and Southern National Bank in Atlanta, Georgia. She met Cameron while he was attending dental school at Emory University and the two were married in the Glenn Memorial Chapel on the Emory University campus in 1954. Soon thereafter, Cameron was commissioned into the United States Navy to serve as an officer on the U.S.S. Glacier GB4 with Admiral Richard E. Byrd. While he was based in Antarctica, Joyce worked

as an elementary school teacher and at a radio station. Upon his return from Antarctica, the couple settled in the beautiful foothills town of Morganton. Joyce worked as the Office Manager for Cameron's dental practice until they retired.

Joyce's deep faith in God was always omnipresent in her life. She was an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Morganton, where she taught Sunday school, served as Circle Chair and was co-founder of the Altar Guild. She also served as the church librarian for many years.

Having grown up on the farm in Metter, GA, her favorite pastime and passion was gardening. She felt closest to God when she was in her garden with her hands in the dirt. Playing golf at Mimosa Hills Golf and Country Club with her family was another source of great pleasure, and, on most occasions, she proved to be the best golfer in the family. She also enjoyed bridge games with family and friends.

Volunteering to help others was important to Joyce. She served on the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross, the Parents Executive Committee of the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry and helped with Kiwanis Club projects and Trout Unlimited fundraisers.

In her later years, Joyce faced a multitude of medical hurdles with formidable strength and resolve. After being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis she became an avid walker and could be found, rain or shine, walking two miles daily around the First Presbyterian Church grounds.

Joyce will best be remembered for being a devoted and loving, lifelong companion to her husband, Cameron, and a wonderful, nurturing mother to her two daughters, Martha Ann and Cam. She always cherished her time with her granddaughters (Sarah, Gillian, Morgan and Meredith) and great grandchildren (Bayley, Stella, Hugo, Zander, Marshall, Freddie and Oscar). Her love for her family and traditions is her legacy to them.

A Celebration of Life for Joyce will be at 3pm Sunday, April 21, 2024 at First United Methodist Church in Morganton with Rev. Dana McKim officiating. The family will receive friends following the service. The service will be live-streamed beginning at 3pm, on the Facebook page of First United Methodist Church Morganton,

(<https://www.facebook.com/fumcmorganton>), or YouTube,
(<https://www.youtube.com/@firstumcmorganton9267/streams>).

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial contribution to the FUMC Altar Guild. (<https://onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth42980/-/form/give/now>)
~ (select Miscellaneous Fund).

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

—Margaret Miller

It was my pleasure to care for Mrs. Keels while at Grace Ridge. She was a special person. I felt a special connection with her. Prayers for her loving family. Patricia Davis

—Patricia Davis

Dear Cameron: so sorry to read of Joyce's passing. I always enjoyed talking with her - such a sweet lady. Peace and Blessings to you and your family.

—Bo Cash



Dr Keels, and family ,my heart breaks for you all .. my condolences to all of you ... I know the big loss you now suffer .. this Lady was a special friend .. I appreciated the many yrs your Dental office took excellent care of me and my hubby and sons .. I pray that our loving merciful Father God will wrap his arms around each of you as you face the tomorrows with out her .. my boys always looked forward to their dental appointments. We love Love you all ..

—Joann Riddle