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Martha Taylor "Buttercup" McGuirk

Oct. 18, 1931 - Nov. 28, 2021

Martha Taylor "Buttercup" McGuirk, aged 90, passed away peacefully at her home in Morganton, NC on November 28th, 2021.

Born October 18th, 1931 in Lookout Mountain, TN to Robert Charles McGuirk and Martha "Dear" Taylor McGuirk. She was the second of three daughters and is survived by her beloved sisters Caroline and Irene. "Buttercup" grew up in the heart of Morganton, NC. She attended Morganton High School and later, Saint Mary's School in Raleigh, NC (class of 1951). At the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (class of 1953), she studied Elementary Education and pledged Chi Omega. Taking great pleasure in her school experiences, "Buttercup" developed cherished, lifelong friendships and became involved in activities such as student leadership and publications.

On August 4th, 1954 she married Bert Edward Harrell. Together they had four children, Diane, Robin, James "Taylor," and John. She lived in Morganton until 1974, later living in Texas, South Carolina, and Alabama, before returning to Morganton in 1986. She worked at the J. Iverson Riddle Center and Dogwood Antiques and was a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and Historic Burke, which allowed her to further her lifelong interest in local history.

“Buttercup” was a character, so much so that she was called by this quirky, and fitting nickname for her entire life. To know her was to be enthralled by her witty sense of humor and masterful storytelling. She loved a good excuse to keep company, especially if that company was her family. “Buttercup” loved her family, despite all of them being "hardheaded and stubborn, just like her." They lovingly remember her as

free-spirited, funny, creative, delightful, generous, devoted, adorable, and truly “a rare pearl.”

“Buttercup” is survived by her children Diane Bordeaux (Jeff) of Durham, NC; Robin Harrell (Roger) of Lubbock, TX; James “Taylor” Harrell of Durham, NC, lately of Morganton, NC; and John Harrell (Toni) of Morganton, NC; her grandchildren Martha McGehee Dwyer (Greg) of Greensboro, NC; Carey McGehee of Hastings, NE; Caroline Poske (Tripp) of Raleigh, NC; and Anna-Marie Harrell of Austin, TX; her sisters Caroline Mayfield of Chevy Chase, MD; and Irene Mayer (Richard) of Washington, DC; as well as nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews: Paul (Margaret) of Chevy Chase, MD; Caroline “Carey” (Paul) of New York City, NY; Jonathan of Annapolis, MD; Christopher (Kim) of Chesapeake, VA; Caroline (Greg); Paul “Bo”; George; Virginia; Sam; Riley; Drew; and Cole; and her many loving friends.

She is preceded in death by her parents Robert Charles McGuirk and Martha Taylor “Dear” McGuirk Griffin.

Sossoman Funeral Home of Morganton, NC, is overseeing arrangements on behalf of the family. She will be interred at Forest Hill Cemetery in Morganton, NC.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Historic Burke Foundation (P.O. Box 915, Morganton, NC, 28680) or the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina (P.O. Box 3023, Morganton, NC 28680), selected to honor her lifelong commitment to the historical and ecological preservation of North Carolina.

Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting www.sossomanfh.com.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.