



Mary Ward Danielson

Dec. 22, 1921 - Nov. 1, 2025

Mary Ward Danielson passed away peacefully on November 1, 2025 at the age of 103.

Born in Paris, Kentucky on December 22, 1921 to James Clay and Cornelia Rosco Ward her formative years in the heart of the Kentucky blue grass region gave her a life-long love of everything Kentucky...thoroughbred horse racing, University of Kentucky basketball and bourbon.

In 1943 Mary graduated from Agnes Scott College with a degree in mathematics. The plan after college was for her to join her father's Lloyds of London based insurance company that insured thoroughbred race horses and, in order to sharpen her business skills, he sent her to Detroit, Michigan where she worked at the JL Hudson Department store as a book buyer. Her father's plans for her were not to be realized as it was in Detroit where she met Hal Danielson, a handsome, young Navy Lieutenant from Connecticut who would sweep her off her feet and become the love of her life. They married in 1947 and started their life together in Woodbury Connecticut where they raised their 2 children at a country home fondly named Brookhill.

they raised their 3 children at a country home today named Brookhill.

It was here where Mary's love of gardening, entertaining, bridge, flower arranging and community involvement would thrive. When her youngest daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia in first grade Mary became a certified dyslexia teacher and during her years in Connecticut tutored scores of dyslexic children through their reading and

writing challenges. The International Dyslexia Association (formerly the Orton Dyslexia Society) would later honor Mary for her dedication to helping people afflicted with dyslexia learn the skills to overcome this learning disorder.

In 1968, Hal's work took them to Beaufort, South Carolina. Their lives flourished in this beautiful Southern Low Country town and Mary's skills and interest in gardening and floral design grew. She was a member of the National Garden Clubs, was a certified Master Gardener, and became a certified Master Flower Show Judge in floral design. Her home was never without some sort of flower arrangement and she loved to share her floral design knowledge and skills. Along with her treasured family heirlooms, her lovingly curated collection of vases would become cherished possessions.

Mary's natural beauty, Southern charm, love of entertaining and outgoing and generous nature drew her to people and the many lasting friendships she and Hal made in Beaufort were a testament to their popularity.

When Hal retired they were interested in living in a residential retirement community which led them to move in 1992, to Grace Ridge in Morganton, North Carolina. Mary and Hal quickly became active members of the Morganton and Grace Ridge communities. Mary spent many happy hours tending her cottage garden, playing bridge, discussing the latest great book with her book club, entertaining her new friends and traveling the world with Hal. Mary was a devout Christian and was an active and longtime member of the First Presbyterian Church in Morganton and their Women's Presbyterian Circle, the DAR and the Daughters of the Barons of Runnemedede.

Mary was a much loved and cherished member of the Morganton and Grace Ridge communities and was given the gift of longevity that not many are blessed with. She had a remarkable talent for making all things look beautiful. She leaves behind a

legacy of kindness, laughter and unforgettable memories. She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 am on Friday, November 14 in the Grace Ridge Chapel. Mary and Hal will be buried together in the family cemetery in Paris, Kentucky at a future date.

Mary was preceded in death by her loving husband, Hal Danielson and her parents James Clay and Cornelia Rosco Ward. She is survived by her children Cornelia Danielson of Florence, Italy, Clay Ward Danielson of Beaufort, South Carolina and Elizabeth Golden of San Antonio, Texas, seven grandchildren and eight great grand children.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Donna Crenshaw for her many years of dedication and care of Mary and to Dr. Ed Plyler and the staff of Grace Ridge Assisted Living for their loving kindness and compassionate care for her these past years.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in Mary's memory to The Grace Ridge Enhancement Fund (Checks can be made to the Blue Ridge Healthcare Foundation with memo - Grace Ridge Enhancement Fund)

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

Tribute Wall

My mother, Sarah Margaret Graham Bell, was a longtime resident at Grace Ridge with her husband, Dr Ira Bell. My mother and Mary Danielson shared a strong friendship and because of that relationship, I came to know Mary as did my brother Bob and sister Nancy. When our mother died in December 2013, Mary was at our side in the days preceding mom's death, and we appreciated her loving support and kindness to all of us. I considered Mary Danielson to be one of the most gracious and accomplished women of her generation, and I appreciate the fact that I got to know her and spend time in her lovely home, that I observed her passion for horse racing and gardening, and that I had the opportunity to engage in lively conversations with her over a glass of good bourbon. My family loved Mary Ward Danielson, and we grieve her passing.

—Peg Graham



So many beautiful memories of time spent with Mary. Monarch Butterflies brought us together. A special memory will be the final release on October 13th. Her smile will forever be imprinted in my heart. Mary will now be with me in the Garden of Grace. A blue butterfly on the sign is in memory of those who have passed before us. Forever in the garden with me. Lee

—Lee and Buddy Helton





Such a kind and caring lady. The community has lost a great lady. Our traveling times together i will always remember.

—Gary&Gail Harbison