



*Sylvia Leigh Doane  
Milne*

**Aug. 9, 1933 - Dec. 13, 2023**

Sylvia Leigh Doane Milne passed away peacefully on December 13, 2023 at her home, Bluebird Farm, in Morganton, North Carolina. Sylvia was born August 9, 1933 in Mansfield, Pennsylvania to Dr. John Horton Doane and Mrs. Gertrude Allen Doane.

Sylvia was a beautiful and beloved person who shed her warm bright light on everyone she met. She loved reading and writing and had vivid childhood memories of taking the short walk to the Mansfield Public Library to check out Nancy Drew mysteries that she would take back to read in the cupola of her family's Victorian home. She went on to study literature and graduated from Connecticut College for Women (now Connecticut College) in 1955. Later in life while working full time, she earned her Master of Arts in Reading Education degree from Appalachian State University.

In college, Sylvia went on a blind date with her friend Polly Milne's handsome brother Peter, who was then studying at nearby Brown University. Sylvia and Peter were smitten from the start and married in 1956. Their 67-year marriage took them from Providence, RI where Peter was getting his degree at the Rhode Island School of Design, to Boston, MA and then to Morganton in 1968. In 1980 they moved to a beautiful 17-acre plot of land in the Oak Hill/Lake James community they named

Bluebird Farm. Peter designed and did much of the work on their solar home himself. In recent years a small studio was added to Bluebird Farm where Sylvia made her special lemon verbena tea as gifts for family and friends and anyone who she felt needed to know they were loved and appreciated.

Sylvia's family knew her unconditional love well. She was the most attentive spouse, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt anyone could ask for. She gave her time and her love without restrictions and had a knack for giving the most unique and special and funny gifts. Her grandchildren have fond memories of time spent with Gram and Pop at Bluebird Farm, making crafts and brownies and giving impromptu bike parades down the driveway.

Sylvia's passion was helping others and as a teacher and then coordinator of Adult Basic Education at Western Piedmont Community College, she coached and championed and cared about the many students and their families who went through the GED and ABE programs. Sylvia loved her colleagues too and considered them lifelong friends. In retirement she pursued another passion—caring for animals. She served as a longtime volunteer for Burke County Friends for Animals where she greeted those seeking to adopt pets with great warmth and encouragement. She and Peter made homes for many (many) animals over the years, including their sweet dog Max, who was a great comfort during the pandemic and throughout Sylvia's last years. Sylvia liked to tell the story of how Max was returned to the shelter twice and so she and Peter had no choice but to take him home. This is emblematic of her mission of unconditional love and service. Her faith in the goodness of people is and will continue to be an inspiration to her friends and family.

She is survived by a large family who loved her deeply: husband Peter Milne, children Jennifer Milne Srivastava (Ravi Srivastava), Charlie Milne (Scott Coleman) Amy Milne (Chris Eselgroth) and grandchildren Katie Chapman (Ryan Chapman), Lilian Eselgroth, Mary Srivastava and Clark Eselgroth (Violetta Keller), sister-in-law Carol Smith Doane, nieces Leigh Doane Doneker (Paul Doneker), Nancy Doane Babbott (David Babbott), Hilary Doane, Cynthia Doane, Coby Budridge (Jim Walsh), Christy Krebs (Mick Krebs) and nephews Richard Doane (Linda Doane) and John Doane (Kerry Doane), and many great nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and brothers John H. Doane, Wilton A. Doane, and Joseph C. Doane, sister-in-laws Hilda Doane and Polly Budridge, brother-in-law Hector Libertali and nieces

laws Linda Doane and Tony Doanage, brother-in-law Hector Obertan, and nieces Kimberly Doane Stewart and Alison Doane.

Sylvia had so many dear friends, including former colleagues, fellow members of St. Marys/St. Stephens, special neighbors and fellow animal rescuers, pool buddies, and all of the home health aides and PACE-at-Home staff who cared for her so thoughtfully and lovingly.

Memorial donations can be made in Sylvia's name to Burke County Friends for Animals at <https://burkecountyfriends4animals.org/>.

A celebration of life will be held at 1pm, Saturday, January 13, 2024 at St. Mary's/St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Friends can contact [amy.milne@yahoo.com](mailto:amy.milne@yahoo.com) to be notified.

Sossoman Funeral Home is assisting the family.

# Tribute Wall

My first memories of Sylvia were at Forsythia Hill in Pennsylvania where parents John (Gramps) and Gertrude (Nanno) lived. Living in the western US, I didn't get to see Aunt Sylvia often though we did spend four years in Winston-Salem and had the opportunity to see her and Peter then. She was unfailingly kind and sweet. My condolences to Peter, Amy, Charlie, and Jenny.

—John A. Doane

My condolences to the family I loved Mrs Sylvia she worked at WPCC with my dad she was a very sweet lady may she RIP

—Anetia Corpening

I got the pleasure of working for Mrs.Sylvia and she was a wonderful lady who made a wonderful impact on my life even though I only knew her for a few months I'll never forget her and her stories and her husband/family. Rest easy Sylvia

—Hannah Pleasants



Charlie, Please accept my sincerest condolences and sympathies. Sending you a hug and praying for you and your family.

—Bertie Jones Morris

Sylvia was a very special lady. Her warmth and caring always made everyone feel special. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

—Ron and Annelle Mulwee



I had the treasure of meeting this lovely lady throughout her help care and her smile just brightened a room . She had a heart of gold and I will truly miss her .the love she showed me and the love from her family I will always treasure rest in heaven Mrs Sylvia

—Julia Ramseur



I had the treasure of meeting this lovely lady throughout her help care and her smile just brightened a room . She had a heart of gold and I will truly miss her .the love she showed me and the love from her family I will always treasure rest in heaven Mrs Sylvia

—Julia Ramseur