



## Betsy Pritchard Rhodes

September 25, 1951 - June 28, 2021

It isn't just that Betsy Rhodes seemed to have love in every cell in her body. It's that she worked every day to send that love out into the world.

Whether it was staying up till all hours preparing a meal, driving across the state when one of her children needed her, or just providing a sympathetic ear when you needed to talk, Betsy helped first and asked questions later.

She punctuated the end of every conversation with "love, love, love," and you knew it came from the heart. She took greeting card sentiments and made them real.

She found a reason to love everyone, and continually looked for ways to serve. Even in hospice care, she wanted to lighten the burden of her nurses, to the point that they had to assure her that they loved their work, they were there to comfort her, and she didn't have to apologize for asking for something.

Betsy Rhodes died June 28 at the age of 69 at Hock Family Pavilion in Durham. She spent her final days there, surrounded by friends and family, after being treated for pancreatic cancer at Duke University Medical Center.

Nearly every day of her life before that she spent in Asheville. She was born

there in 1951, moved back after college, and spent most of her adult life in a house just a couple of blocks from the one where she grew up.

Betsy truly bloomed where she was planted. She spent her lifetime as the member of one church, Grace Covenant Presbyterian on Merrimon Avenue. She spent her professional career as a teacher in the Asheville public schools. And she had one true love, Sam Rhodes, whom she married in 1978.

Together they raised three children: Jim, who now lives in Charlotte with wife Chelsea and daughters Ellie, Maggie and Sadie; Katie, who lives in Charlotte with husband Erik Mendelssohn and son Samuel; and Meg, who lives in Raleigh with husband Alan Chester.

Betsy and Sam devoted their lives to their children during that phase of life, and there was no length Betsy would not go to, whether it meant making her now-famous football pie for Jim's football team at Asheville High, driving Katie back to class at Carolina through a blizzard (or at least trying to), or staying up all night on the bathroom floor comforting Meg through a bout of migraines – and still getting up to go to work the next morning.

She drove the wheels off four Chrysler minivans, racking up more than a half-million miles all told. Seeing Betsy flying around town with kids and casseroles in tow was a common sight. Unseen were the nights she jumped in the minivan and drove to Raleigh or Charlotte or wherever it was that one of her children was in need. She might have to drive back to Asheville the next morning, but that didn't deter her.

But a bottomless well of compassion did not mean that Betsy was a pushover. Her children and students knew that her love came with certain expectations of behavior, including keeping your language clean. When her niece told her to "kick cancer's a-s-s," Betsy corrected her: "You mean kick cancer's bottom."

She had the ability to find the good in seemingly every situation, yet was not a Pollyanna. She might not condemn you, but neither would she be afraid to tell you when you were making a bad decision.

Her view of life undoubtedly stemmed in part from her deep faith. She lived out the Christian ideal of loving God with all your heart, and loving your neighbor as yourself. Her parents, Bill and Bettie Jean Pritchard, were founding members of Grace Covenant. The church helped raise her, and then she repaid the debt many times over.

When she returned to Asheville as a young adult, she served as a youth group adviser. Over the years she served in every role imaginable, including chairman of worship, chairman of Christian education, deacon, elder, and leader of the welcoming committee. In 2016 she was named an honorary life member of the Presbyterian Women, recognizing her lifetime of commitment to the church.

Under that guideline, Betsy could probably be an honorary life member of a hundred other organizations. Among them, the Kappa Kappa Iota teaching sorority. She was active in the sorority throughout her teaching career and into retirement, and was a leader, serving in numerous roles including president at both the state and local levels.

Teaching was a true passion. She started teaching right after she graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1973, and she didn't stop even after she officially retired in 2003. During that 30-year stretch she taught at two schools -- William Randolph Elementary and Ira B. Jones Elementary -- most often teaching third grade, and often pulling double-duty as a teacher for academically gifted students.

She earned a masters degree in education early in her career but never sought an administrative job, believing she could help children most in the classroom. After retiring, she worked as a reading tutor for elementary students, and taught an early childhood development class through Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College at several high schools across the county. Betsy remained active in all of the passions of her life until her cancer diagnosis in April.

In addition to her husband, children and grandchildren, she is survived by her three siblings — Ellen Henderson of Goldsboro, N.C.; Billy Pritchard of Romney, W.Va.; and David Pritchard of Columbus, N.C. — as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews, and the loving friends that Betsy considered family.

The family would like to thank everyone that has sent prayers, care packages, flowers, cards, food, messages and support over the past few months as Betsy battled the many health issues. That support gave Betsy and her family the love and energy they needed each and every day.

Betsy's family will receive friends on Saturday, July 10th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Morris Funeral & Cremation Care. Betsy's memorial service is scheduled for 2:00 pm on Sunday, July 11th at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville. The family will lay Betsy to rest, next to her Mother and Father, at Riverside Cemetery in Asheville.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to the Asheville City Schools Foundation or MANNA Food Bank in honor of Betsy's memory.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 10. 6:00 PM (ET)

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care  
304 Merrimon Ave.  
Asheville, NC 28801  
(828) 252-1821  
info@morrisfamilycare.com  
<http://www.morrisfamilycare.com>

## Memorial Service

JUL 11. 2:00 PM (ET)

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church  
789 Merrimon Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28804

## Graveside Service

JUL 11 (ET)

Riverside Cemetery  
53 Birch Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

# Tribute Wall



“ *Betsy Pritchard Rhodes*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *Betsy Rhodes was a volunteer in my classroom during my first few years teaching. Without her guidance, patience, and encouragement it is unlikely I would still be in the classroom.*

**Brian Randall** - October 01, 2021 at 01:45 PM



“ *I was so sorry we were out of town for Betsy's service. What a sweetheart! When we moved our family to Asheville, Betsy was one of our first friends at GCPC. She is unforgettable as someone who pulled 'newbies' in and stayed engaged.*

*We are so grateful she befriended the Dykes Family!*

*Steve & Sandra Dykes*

**sandra dykes** - July 17, 2021 at 11:47 AM

VH

“ I have known Betsy since Elementary School days....Jones Elementary (Grace School). We both taught at Jones, I taught The girls, Jim and Nat were and are best of friends, we were neighbors, I was a neighbor and artist friend with her mother, I was a member at Grace.....the list goes on. She WAS undoubtedly the most caring individual I have EVER know. Every time someone was sick or a death in my family, , she was there. Betsy was an angel. I will forever be grateful I had the chance to know her.



*I need to also say ALL the Rhodes are just that way. Hopefully God will help you all*

*Through the pain you must feel. I too have been there. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. You'll find it....The light will then be in your heart for ever.*

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vicki Hall - July 11, 2021 at 08:26 PM

JW

“ I met Betsy thru Joan Gibson, a coworker , friend and my twin sister. She was such a fun loving , caring and sweet person..I always admired her. Please know I will be praying for the family during these sad times..My heart goes out to each and every one. love, Janet Ward

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janet ward - July 11, 2021 at 01:43 PM

JM

“ So sad to hear of Betsy's passing. God will greet her with open arms and likely put her to work making use of her very Christian spirit & skills. I have long admired Betsy and the love she so clearly had for her GCPC family and her family. Condolences to her family personal and church and all the friends she had in the community and beyond.



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**Joyce Moncada** - July 11, 2021 at 12:08 PM

WR

“ When we moved to Asheville in 1980 we soon met Betsy and Sam. We are so grateful that we have known and worked with Betsy in many different ways through the years. Betsy always, no matter the circumstances or situation, showed us and many, many others amazing love and compassion with a beautiful Betsy smile. We will always cherish our memories of Betsy. We send much love to Sam, Katie, Jim, Meg, and the entire Rhodes family.  
Love, Warren and Pam Riggle

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**Warren and Pam Riggle** - July 11, 2021 at 11:40 AM

MC

“ Know that you are in my thoughts and prayers at this time. Betsy will always be in your heart and cherished memories

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**Margaret Crum** - July 10, 2021 at 10:22 PM

AB

“ Sam & Family I am so very sorry to hear of your loss of Betsy. Far too early in life....  
I believe that I babysat for your kids, once or twice in the mid 1980's  
Abby Bates

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**Abby Bates** - July 09, 2021 at 05:06 PM

JU

“ Betsy was my 4th grade teacher at Ira B Jones but she was so much more to me than a teacher. We shared the same birthday, my mom was Meg’s babysitters, and all through these years Betsy has kept in touch with me. She was such a sweet soul with much love to give to all she knew and loved.

*Sam,Jim,Katie,Meg I am so sorry for your loss.*

*I have not saw Betsy for many years but always looked forward to each Christmas card to see your growing family. May God wrap His loving arms around you all during this difficult time.*

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**Jeanette(Frisbee) Underwood** - July 09, 2021 at 09:59 AM

VM

“ As a result of my friendship with her mother, I've been lucky to know Betsy the last few years. Never have I met anyone kinder or more generous in every way. Surely the angel count went up when she left us. Verna McGaughey, Asheville

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**Verna McGaughey** - July 08, 2021 at 01:02 PM

CH

“ Our hearts go out to your family in this time. Very sorry for your loss. Betsy was a light and will be missed. I will always remember her as a fixture of north asheville life growing up and how her care and humor made school a welcome place. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in this time, her spirit presence and impact live on. Lots of love from the Howell family.

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**chip howell** - July 08, 2021 at 07:12 AM

PK

“ I am so sorry to hear of Betsy's passing. I worked with her at AB Tech and Jones and always found her to be so authentic with a heart that genuinely loved life. She also taught my son and would go out of her way to keep him on the right path academically. She was a special teacher and friend who will be greatly missed by all. Much love and prayers to the Rhodes family.

*Pam Kirby*

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**Pam Kirby** - July 07, 2021 at 05:56 PM

DW

“ I am so very sorry to hear of the loss of such a bright soul. I was flooded with memories of Betsy. I knew her early in my career when I was a counselor at Jones. She was one of those rare master teachers who taught from the head and heart. But Betsy was more than that. When I had a foster child who experienced behavioral/emotional challenges, Betsy offered to have him in her class. Her patience, encouragement, and love for him made a difference in his life. I have had the great good fortune with work over 36 years now in public education in NC and California, and Betsy stands out as one of those remarkable teachers, and human beings, whose life touched so many people. My deepest condolences to the family. I hope you find some comfort in knowing that Betsy influence lives on in the countless lives that she touched. She was one of a kind and a rare and wonderful soul.

*Dr. Gary Waddell*  
*San Francisco, California*

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**Dr. Gary Waddell** - July 07, 2021 at 12:39 PM

KB

“ To Sam Jim, Katie and Meg, our family sends deepest sympathy for the loss of your precious wife and mother. She was so special and even after 20 years of our absence from Asheville, Betsy would occasionally reach out to me through Facebook just to see how we all were doing. She taught our oldest two children at Ira B Jones in the 80's, and got to know our youngest through the Voyagers program for dads and daughters in the 90's. She was caring and genuine, a true Christian ambassador. How fortunate for us to have known her. Blessings to all the Rhodes with our love and many happy memories, Kathy, Jay and children John, Ali and Theresa Banks

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**Kathy Banks** - July 07, 2021 at 11:28 AM

CA

“ Sending lots of love and prayers to all of the Family. Betsy and I grew up together in Beaver Lake. She was a good sport to drive her brother and my brothers to sports practices! I always seemed to run into her when I came back to Asheville from Tampa. It was always wonderful to see her and we would catch up. Her obituary was beautiful just like she was. Sending heartfelt condolences. I was just terribly sad to hear this news.

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**Carole Winkenwerder Anderson** - July 06, 2021 at 07:04 PM

BL

“ Betsy and I grew up together and went to school together thru high school. She was always amazing and gave her all to whomever needed her. We had fun as kids and I will miss her. Her family should be very, very proud of her.. Much love and prayers to the family....Love, Betsy Lovelace

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**Betsy Lovelace** - July 06, 2021 at 05:48 PM

MG

“ It was an honor to know Betsy and a blessing to have her as both our daughters' third grade teacher at Jones. She was loved by everyone who knew her and her upbeat spirit and sense of humor will be dearly missed. Sending our deepest condolences and healing prayers to her family.

*Tom and Marque Goodrich*

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**Marque Warrick Goodrich** - July 06, 2021 at 04:32 PM

DW

“ This is a beautifully written tribute to Betsy. Anyone who didn't know her, upon reading this, would think it is too good to be true, written by a loved one who is romanticizing her life. Here's the deal...Every. Single. Word. Is. True.

*Fact is she is teaching me goodness and selfless spirit even now. No worries Rhodes Fam, she won't be forgotten! ❤️*

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**Debbie Welch** - July 06, 2021 at 03:22 PM

SH

“ Betsy was my elementary school best friend and spent many sleepover nights with her back then. High school and then the inevitable college separation occurred. In later years I would run into her at Merrimon Ingles store on occasion and we would quickly catch up. The most open and loving person I ever knew. She will light up the angels' faces. Love to her family.

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**Spring Harkins** - July 06, 2021 at 11:58 AM

BG

“ *Betsy Rhodes was one of those special people loved by everyone. Never an unkind word about anyone and always willing to pitch in and provide support on a moments notice. She will be sorely missed, but left a lasting imprint on her family and friends that will last for so many years to come. Sam and the kids are in our thoughts and prayers. God bless each of you.*



*Barbara and Charlie Gardner*

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**Barbara Gardner** - July 06, 2021 at 11:34 AM

NQ

“ *As the Building Administrator for Grace Covenant Church, I had the pleasure of seeing Betsy often. She would always come into the office with that smile and easy manner of hers. I had to call on Betsy from time to time for help and she always came through for me with that bright spirit of hers and took care of whatever needed to be completed. I considered her my friend and we share many conversations over the years whenever she would stop by. She was there during my darkest time with such love and support. I will miss her, but I know that Heaven has gained a beautiful angel.*

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**Nancy Quick** - July 05, 2021 at 07:05 PM

SB

“ *Always will be grateful for the concern for and help with my mom, during my daughters wedding. Awesome lady, will be missed.*

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**Sandy Blakely** - July 05, 2021 at 06:30 PM

BS

“ Heaven will light up with your smile Betsy. I only got to know you in High School and will always remember your great, uplifting personality. Rest in peace my friend.

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**Bud Sowers** - July 05, 2021 at 06:16 PM

CC

“ It's been years since I talked to Betsy but I can still see her smiling face. My prayers are with this family.

Betsy and I worked together at Wm Randolph as third grade teachers. Francis

Williams, Betsy, and myself would always find some humor and laugh everyday of the week. Such a sweet person! it was a pleasure working with Betsy.



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**Carolyn Worthy Clemmons** - July 04, 2021 at 12:48 AM

VW

“ My deepest sympathy to the family. I worked in Asheville City School. Betsy was a sweet person. Sam was a salesman for Standard Paper. I saw Betsy at Inge's on merrimon and we would talk. I will miss her smile an talked

Virginia Worthy

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**Virginia Worthy** - July 03, 2021 at 07:58 AM

TS

“ Prayers for the family. What a wonderful human being who touched so many as teacher, friend, neighbor & example!! Always smiling & uplifting! RIP sweet Becky! 🙏🙏

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**tedd & Gail Smith** - July 02, 2021 at 10:49 PM

DH

“ *To the Rhodes Family:  
I am sending my sincere condolences to you. Betsy  
and I taught together at Jones Primary. We share some great times  
together as co-workers and mothers. My God continue to shower  
his blessings upon each one of you.*  
*Diatha Harris*

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**Diatha Harris** - July 01, 2021 at 09:58 PM

SH

“ *So sorry to hear of your loss. I taught with  
Betsy at Randolph Elementary, we both  
taught third grade. A very nice person.*  
*Sarah Weston Hart*



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**Sarah Weston Hart** - June 30, 2021 at 10:31 PM

BP

*May God's peace that passes all understanding be with you. I worked  
with Betsy at Jones for many years. She was a joy to work with.*  
*Barbara Peek*

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**Barbara Peek** - July 11, 2021 at 08:55 AM