



Mrs. Bettie Jean Gruver Pritchard

April 20, 1918 - October 7, 2015

Having lived a life as fully as it can be lived, Bettie Jean Gruver Pritchard died peacefully at the Western North Carolina Baptist Home on Oct. 7. She was 97. A lifelong resident of Asheville, she was known for her art, her love of church and family, and her omnipresent kind word and smile.

Her parents Harry and Mabel Gruver moved to the area from Minnesota at the turn of the century when her father worked as an accountant at the Hans Rees Tannery. Bettie was born on April 20, 1918, the younger of the family's two daughters. Her sister Winona was born in 1913 and died in 2010, also at the age of 97.

Perhaps her proudest legacy is her family, a large, extended network that loved gathering at her home for holidays and other occasions, full of people who will miss her deeply. Bettie was married to T.W. Pritchard Jr. for 53 years, before his death in 1991. She is survived by four children: Ellen Henderson; T.W. Pritchard III (Billy) and his wife Maureen; Betsy Rhodes and her husband Sam; and David Pritchard and his wife Celia.

She also had nine grandchildren, who gave her six great-grandchildren: Will Lingo and his wife Kristen, and their children Joe and Kate; Dylan Pritchard; Elizabeth Schonberg and her husband J.J., and their children Jack and Caroline; Jim Rhodes and his wife Chelsea, and their children Ellie and Maggie; Katie Rhodes and her fiancée Erik Mendelssohn; Jonathan Pritchard; Meg Chester and her husband Alan; Lana Pritchard; and Graeson Pritchard. Bettie was a charter member of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church on

Merrimon Avenue when it became a mission church of First Presbyterian Church in Asheville in 1953 and was an active member throughout her life, serving as both an elder and a Sunday school teacher, among many other roles.

She developed and created beautiful banners and paraments for her church and other churches for many years, adding color to worship through the liturgical seasons of the year.

She also reveled in the beauty of God's creation in the form of art, earning both a bachelor's degree in art at the University of North Carolina-Asheville and a master's degree in art history at Western Carolina. She was a member of an Asheville artists' group in the early 1970s known as the Thursday Tens that included nine other local female artists.

She taught art for many years at Montreat-Anderson College, as well as Cedar Lane Studio with longtime friend Margaret Harvey, and the Asheville Art Museum and anywhere else she found people who shared in her love for art. She painted widely in her adult years and showed her works at galleries and exhibitions throughout the region, and her work is represented in the permanent collections of several local businesses.

Her pursuit of college degrees later in life was indicative of her thirst for knowledge, and she never stopped learning and growing. Her post-secondary education began at Meredith College in 1935, and continued at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

She also was a longtime member of the Children's Welfare League, the N.C. Watercolor Society and the Kenilworth Book Club.

The family gives thanks to the nursing staff in both the assisted living and health care units at the Baptist Home and the staff of Four Seasons Hospice for their care, and the dedicated team of doctors and caregivers in Asheville for their love and tenderness in the final years of Bettie's life.

A memorial service is planned for Sunday, October 11, 2015 at 2 p.m. at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. A reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Bettie's name

to Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, 789 Merrimon Ave., Asheville, NC 28804; or Manna Food Bank, 627 Swannanoa River Road, Asheville, NC 28805.

Morris Funeral Home, 304 Merrimon Ave., is assisting the family.

Condolences may be sent through the website, www.morrisfamilyfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT 11. 2:00 PM (ET)

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
789 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804

Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Bettie Jean Gruver Pritchard*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *Betsy I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your mother. I know you will miss her very much. You and your family will be in my thoughts and prayers. Blessings and God's peace to you.*

Much love

Teri Morris

Teri Morris - November 11, 2015 at 12:07 PM



“ *My prayers go out to you, Betsy and Sam and your families. Your sharing of Bettie's attendance at so many of your family's weddings, birthdays and reunions have allowed me to see how lovely Bettie remained through her life. She always made me welcome when I would visit Betsy and spend the night and she endured slumber parties in her home with crazy preteens! I know she did have a full life and was so talented and kind. Such a long life. Such a gift she was to her family. My condolences to you all.*

Spring Harkins

Spring Harkins - October 14, 2015 at 09:25 AM

TR

“ Growing up next to the Pritchard home in Asheville was a joy, especially in the summertime. Ms. Pritchard gifted the neighborhood kids with the use of the backyard for the funnest and funniest kickball or wiffle ball tournaments in the city. Betsy, thank you for your kind words, and thank you, Ms. Pritchard, for your spirit in the neighborhood.

The Rocamora Family

The Rocamoras - October 10, 2015 at 12:04 PM

CG

“ I was privileged to know 'Ms. Bettie Jean" all my growing up days as Billy and Ellen's mother and in later years as my friend. She was kind to encourage me in water color painting and we enjoyed several workshops together. Near the end of her stay in her home, Bettie Jean opened her arms and her studio for me to come paint with her, just for fun. We covered in conversation all the years we had shared while covering the canvas. Her beautiful spirit will remain with us always. Cindy Nash Groce

cindy groce - October 09, 2015 at 12:39 PM

JM

“ To be in Bettie's presence was to be in the presence of grace and goodness, beauty and blessings. She had the longest of arms which she wrapped around any and all and her heart was so large that all she encountered found a place therein. My memories are many - marveling in her creativity as she designed and sewed beautiful banners that enriched the visual dimension of worship at Grace Covenant, being welcomed into her home time and time again, hearing stories of her family, marveling at her ability to transform a plain piece of paper into a masterpiece of artwork. Many years ago now I "commissioned" her to paint a picture of the North Carolina mountains to hang in our family room. When she completed the painting she refused any payment, insisting that it was her gift to me. Little did she know that it was actually two gifts; one - the painting itself and two - unknown to her the scene she selected to paint was of the valley just north of Asheville where some of my ancestors settled. Being with Bettie was always a blessing. Even in these last years when life was challenging she managed to be gracious and thoughtful. I shall miss our all too infrequent visits with her whenever Elizabeth and I were in Asheville but I shall always carry her in my heart. - Jay McKell

Jay McKell - October 09, 2015 at 03:38 AM

SL

“ Bettie was such a wonderful person and will be missed by so many. I still have my wedding invitation that she painted and always think of her whenever I see it. My thoughts, prayers, and love to all of you.

Sandy (McDonnold) LaVay

sl - October 08, 2015 at 07:05 PM

JM

“ *Bettie was such a beautiful lady inside and out.....always smiling and happy. Harry mentioned many time that when he and Hexie were in college, all their friends thought Bettie looked just like Ester Williams (a famous movie star of her time). They were very proud of her.*

What a wonderful artist too! I have several of her paintings that I love and will always cherish them.

My heart goes out to all the Pritchards.

With much love and my deepest sympathy.

Jane McDonnold

Jane McDonnold - October 08, 2015 at 05:12 PM

PM

My heart goes out to the family and all Bettie's many friends. I recall when arriving in Asheville that Bettie took me under her wing with the mission to introduce me to her "art world". What a pleasure and what a generous gift. Pam Myers

pamela myers - October 16, 2015 at 10:12 AM

JS

“ I loved Bettie. She was the Chair of the Music Minister Search Committee that called me to Grace Covenant in 1987. I had just graduated with my master's degree in church music and was only 23. Your Mom was so kind and supportive of me. I always remember that she made me an incredible lunch to take with me in the car following my interview in Asheville. I had never been to NC or Asheville and her hospitality was so gracious. Keith and I have two paintings of your Mom's that we treasure. They continue to hold a prominent place in our home and always will. I always think of her when I look at them and give thanks to God for having known her. I will never forget her!

Love to you all. I regret that I cannot be the memorial service, due to my own church responsibilities, but I will be there in thought and prayer.

Peace to you,

John Semingson, Nashville, TN

Minister of Music for Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1987-90 & 1993-2000.

John Semingson - October 08, 2015 at 02:27 PM

MW

“ So sorry to hear of your loss. Sending up prayers for all of you. -Jim, Megan, Colin, and Daniel Whelen.

Megan Whelen - October 08, 2015 at 12:43 PM