



Martha Mynatt (Marty) Dean

September 20, 1930 - December 17, 2023

Martha Mynatt (Marty) Dean, 93, of Asheville, died peacefully at her home on December 17, 2023. Born Sept. 20, 1930, in Knoxville, TN, she was the daughter of the late Walter W. (Judd) Mynatt and Martha Young Mynatt.

Growing up in Knoxville, where her father served first as mayor and then as city manager, she often accompanied him on public business. As a result, she developed, at an early age, a deep understanding and intense passion for politics. After graduating from Knoxville High School and the University of Tennessee with an education degree, she became a lifelong member of Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority and taught school for a year before being employed by the University Registrar's Office, where she was responsible for integrating returning GIs into the academic and social life of UT. There, she met her future husband, a handsome airman named Rayburn H. Dean, who remained the love of her life for 65 years, before preceding her in death in 2019.

After having children, Marty decided to stay home to focus on being a dedicated and loving wife and mother, a job at which she excelled. Through leadership in Girl Scouting and countless hours served as a volunteer classroom assistant, she became a surrogate mom to many of her children's friends, and later in life, a "mother hen" to all the younger folk who found their way into her orbit. She was a lover of people, a loyal friend, a good listener, a faithful and compassionate caregiver, an advocate for justice and equity, a

networker, connector, and a builder of relationships. She was known for single-handedly keeping Hallmark and USPS in business due to her prolific habit of sending cards to everyone she knew on every holiday and special occasion.

Marty lived her faith joyfully, as a servant leader, putting God, family, and the needs of others before her own. An active member of First Presbyterian Church in Morristown, TN for 16 years, and then of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, NC for 53 years. She was ordained as a Ruling Elder, taught Sunday School and VBS, served as a youth advisor, chaired personnel search committees, and held the church record for the longest number of years of choir participation at 44 consecutive years. She served in leadership capacities on countless councils, committees, and was honored with a Presbyterian Women Life Membership Award for decades of commitment and service to the church. She and Ray were active volunteers with transportation, hunger, and bereavement ministries, with Room in the Inn, and along with two other couples, as coordinators of the church's refugee resettlement program.

Marty was also a loyal community volunteer, involved in the shelter and medical ministries of ABCCM, Meals on Wheels, WNCAids Project, and Mission Hospital. For many years, she served as Registrar and Chief Judge in her precinct for the Buncombe County Board of Elections.

Marty's greatest joy in life was undoubtedly her grandchildren, of whom she was tremendously proud. A close second was spending time camping, hiking, and traveling. She and Ray, often with the entire family in tow, traveled extensively throughout Western Europe & the Baltic States, North & South America, East Africa, and to all the 50 US states. They counted trips to Alaska, the Galapagos Islands, and Kenya among their travel highlights, but were ultimately most happy in a tent, atop Mt. Pisgah, or with a backpack and walking stick in hand, on the slopes and trails of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Marty will be remembered for her fierce spirit, her technical mastery of social media, her passion for politics, her warm hospitality, her resilience in the face of health challenges, and her deep and abiding love for her family and friends. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother and will be missed greatly by her family.

She left us with words of wisdom to share: “Love everyone; Forgive even when it’s hard; Beware false prophets, especially in church and government; By all means, vote (just not for you know who)!”

Marty is survived by her daughter Marcy Dean Onieal and husband Jimmy Lamm of Marshall, NC, her son Walter Dean and wife Janel of Milton, GA, and five grandchildren, Meredith Dean of Charlotte, NC, Harrison Dean and wife Taylor of Canton, GA, Miles Norcom of Milton, GA, Bianca Norcom of Nashville, TN, and Grant Norcom of Athens, GA.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, February 17 at 2:00 PM (prelude beginning at 1:30 PM) at Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church, 101 Chapel Lane, Swannanoa, with the Revs. Margaret LaMotte Torrence and Jay McKell officiating. The family will receive friends immediately following the service in the Fellowship Hall. A live stream of the service will be available by link on the church’s website (warrenwilsonchurch.org) or directly via the church’s YouTube channel. Interment will follow at a later date in the Memorial Garden of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Asheville.

The family would like to thank the staff of Biltmore Medical, A New Hope Home Care, CarePartners home hospice team, and especially Teesha Holladay Johnson for the excellent care, friendship, and love provided to Marty throughout her final journey.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the non-profit agencies long supported by Marty & Ray, and whose missions were very close to their hearts: Habitat Aid Initiative (Habitataid.org); Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy (Appalachian.org); or Manna Foodbank (Mannafoodbank.org).

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 17. 1:30 PM (ET)

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church
101 Chapel Lane
Swannanoa, NC 28778

The family will receive friends immediately following the service in the Fellowship Hall.

Tribute Wall

JB

“ *I'm sorry, Marcy.* ”

John T. Barrett - February 25, 2024 at 03:23 PM

MO

John, Thank you so much.

Marcy Onieal - March 04, 2024 at 11:42 PM