



Betty Anderson

May 21, 1927 - July 29, 2024

Obituary

Betty Lewis Anderson

Betty Pauline Lewis was born in Derby, Connecticut, on May 21, 1927, the eldest of five children

born to Isaac Edward Lewis and Hazel Johnson Lewis.

Unbeknownst to the Lewis family and their friends, Clifford and Susan Anderson, a brief

childhood greeting between their two eldest children, Betty and Larry, would result in a lifelong

partnership. Her courtship with her husband, Larry Anderson, included, to her mother's dismay,

an Indian brand motorcycle and cut-off denim shorts. They were wed on July 28, 1951, and

honeymooned in a tent on Martha's Vineyard. Their marriage lasted 47 years until Larry's death in 1998.

Betty was initiated into the Gamma Nu Sigma Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority,

Incorporated on May 20, 1951, as one of the first groups of new members to join what is now

the Hartford Alumnae Chapter. In 1959, Betty was one of 23 charter members

of New Haven

Alumnae Chapter, which celebrates its 65th year on October 3, 2024. She remained an active

and enthusiastic member of NHAC for years to come, frequently organizing the annual

Jabberwock fundraising event, and occasionally enlisting her own children as performers.

A lifelong learner, Betty was also a lifelong educator. She earned her undergraduate degree in

education from New Haven State Teachers College (now Southern Connecticut State University)

in 1948. Betty began her decades-long career as an elementary school teacher at Sarah Rossen

School in Hartford, CT, a position she was required to relinquish in 1951 due a common

restriction at the time prohibiting pregnant women from teaching in public schools. She was in contact with two of her first students through last year.

She taught in the New Haven school

system for six years and spent almost 25 years of her teaching career in Hamden, CT, at Bear

Path and Ridge Hill schools. Betty's creative and compassionate approach to teaching was

recognized by her students over the years, many of whom remember her as their most

influential and favorite teacher. Her skills as an educator gained formal recognition when she

was named Hamden's Teacher of the Year in 1986, and in 1987 when she received the

Connecticut State Board of Education's Teacher of the Year award for a local school district.

Betty's passion and talent as an educator extended beyond the classroom. In her own senior years and early in her retirement, she shared her passion for floral arrangement by teaching seniors at a local seniors' program. After retirement, Betty served as a volunteer docent at the Yale University Peabody Museum for over two decades, where she was affectionately known as the "Dinosaur Lady." She also served on the Museum's Associates Council and helped with public events and programs, including the "Peabody on the Road" program and the Museum's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration. In 2012, she received the Ethel Stone Award for long-term service to the Museum, awarded to a single volunteer each year who had demonstrated exceptional and long-term commitment to the Museum.

Betty's love of language was rooted in her Latin language studies and often found expression in word play, puns, and gentle but insistent spelling and grammar corrections. She often confounded people, including medical providers, who underestimated her keen wit, language mastery, and breadth of knowledge. Her crossword puzzle solving skills were, and still are, unmatched in the family.

She will be remembered for the many adages and bits of wisdom she shared freely, which

reflected values that guided her throughout the years:

“Age is just a number you write in pencil and eraser.”

“Old teachers never die; they just lose their class.”

“My mother used to say, if you live long enough, you’ll see everything.”

“I didn’t have to die to go to heaven.”

Betty Pauline Lewis Anderson is survived by her four children, Lauren, Peter (Rita), Muslima, and Matthew; her four grandchildren, Ghairunisa, Shante, Elijah, and Matthew; her great-granddaughter, Selah; her sister-in-law Gwendolyn Lewis; and many loving nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by her husband, Laurence Whitman Anderson, her parents, and her younger siblings: Bunny, who died at the age of 2 years; Marguerite Washington; David Lewis; and Sherwood Lewis.

The family extends its sincere gratitude to those who provided loving and professional care for our mother in her final years: the ACE program at the Jewish Community Center, Mercy Home Health, and Crescent City physicians. Thanks to our churches, First and Summerfield United Methodist Church in New Haven, and St. Anna’s Episcopal Church in New Orleans, who loved our mother. We are especially grateful to Epiphanie and Yolanda who were constant companions and good company for Mom. Finally, we thank NOLA Elite Professionals who provided caregivers during the past few years.

Betty leaves a legacy of generosity, sharp wit, and love of learning. Through the final moments, hers was a life well lived. She so often gave thanks to God for three great gifts: good health, good family, and good memories. She loved, and was beloved by, those who had the good fortune to know her. All would agree, she was very unique [sic].

We will celebrate Betty's life at a Requiem Mass at St. Anna's Episcopal Church, New Orleans (1313 Esplanade Avenue) on Saturday, September 5, 2024. Visitation from 5 pm. The Mass will begin promptly at 6 pm, followed by a repast. For those who cannot join us in person, this service will be live streamed on St. Anna's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=st.%20anna%27s%20episcopal%20church>.

We will also have a celebration of Betty's life in Connecticut on Saturday, October, 26 2024, at First and Summerfield United Methodist Church, New Haven (425 College Street) at a time to be determined.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to St. Anna's Episcopal Church's youth program Anna's Place Nola. <https://annasplacenola.org/>
New Orleans Funeral and Cremation Service
"Celebrating Life"

Tribute Wall



“ *remembering Mrs Anderson in my prayers and at the altar. Trusting she's found rest 'where the light of God's face shines'. Her family and loved ones are especially in my prayers these days.* ”

James Deshotels - September 05, 2024 at 05:50 PM