



Betty Jean Higdon Croomes

May 5, 1929 - January 23, 2021

Betty Jean Higdon Croomes has fought the good fight and finished her race. She was called home to Jesus on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2021. She was 91.

Born Feb. 5, 1929, to William and Odessa Higdon in Birmingham, her battle began at a young age when she was stricken with polio. She underwent treatment at the same mineral springs in Georgia that President Franklin Roosevelt visited. Here, she bonded with other children and dreamed of a future beyond polio - which was never certain.

However, it came. Betty stood tall in spite of the lingering effects of the disease and participated in school clubs and Homefront efforts during World War 2. In 1950, she married Edgar Croomes in Chattanooga, Tenn.

The couple welcomed their first son, Steven, in 1955 and moved to Huntsville soon after. In 1958, their second son Scott was born and a daughter, Kristin, in 1960. The family lived on a small piece of acreage in East Limestone where Edgar ran a farm when not working at Redstone Arsenal and Betty tended to the home.

She desired to work herself, deciding upon a career in elementary education and earning her bachelor's degree from Athens College and masters degree from Alabama A&M. When asked why she wanted to teach second grade, she

answered because she wanted to be the tallest person in the room and the math was easy.

For the better part of the next three decades, she taught – all but two years of her career at Julian Newman Elementary in Athens. She retired in 1995, with dozens of children influenced by her silent style of reserved strength and courage.

She survived widowhood (Edgar preceded her in death in 1989), breast cancer, COVID, and the loss of an adult child who cared for her and kept her on her toes during retirement (Steven preceded her in death in 2015). She loved fussing over her dog Andy and wept when she couldn't keep him anymore and when he died in 2019. They are now across that Rainbow Bridge together.

She saw London, Rome, New Orleans, Australia and New Zealand, but stayed rooted and grounded in love of family and community. She garnered the adoration of her grandchildren, whom she kept and cared for many a carefree afternoon with an ample supply of apples and ice cream sandwiches.

Above all, Betty was a servant of the Lord. As long as she was able, she worshipped at Central Church of Christ with her family. She led and attended Bible studies (one of her favorite retirement activities) and would whistle or hum hymns while puttering around the house. A Bible was always on the nightstand or next to her recliner and a prayer not far from her lips.

Left in her absence are her son Scott (Nancy) Croomes, daughter Kristin (Raymond) Keimig, both of Athens; grandchildren Benjamin Croomes of Elkmont, David (Ashlee) Croomes of Burbank, Calif., Rebecca Croomes of Athens, Aundrea (Alexander) Blythe of Madison, and Matthew Keimig of Athens. She also leaves behind three great-granddaughters, Lerrin, Emma,

and Everleigh.

Private family services will be held this week with burial to follow in Albertville, where she will be laid to rest alongside her husband Edgar and other family members. If you were a student of hers, know that she remembers all of you now and is proud of the person you are.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ *Betty Jean Higdon Croomes*

Christa B. Bolton - January 26, 2021 at 07:56 PM

MH

“ *I was one of her students. I loved her then and I love her now.*

Melissa Haggard - January 25, 2021 at 06:38 PM

LN

“ *I'm so sorry to hear of the passing of Betty. We taught together at Julian Newman for years. She was a sweet and precious person. There are so many funny stories from our time together in 2nd grade. She was a funny person herself. Bless you all in this time of grief. Linda Nelson*

Linda Nelson - January 25, 2021 at 02:32 PM

SC

“ *The world lost a hero this week. Mrs. Croomes was my 2nd grade teacher, and an incredible woman. Though she taught in a public school, she never failed to read us the Bible every morning before teaching. She prayed faithfully for us, and no doubt, many others. Her passing leaves big shoes to fill for those who pray. May we be so bold in our faith and so kind in our manner as Betty! ~Summer Greenhaw Christopher*

Summer Christopher - January 25, 2021 at 01:11 PM