



Berniss Payne Byrd

April 17, 1927 - August 22, 2018

Berniss Leila Payne Byrd was born in Richmond, Virginia on April 17, 1927 to the late Willianna F. and William H. Payne, Jr. She was the fourth of six children and had a close-knit relationship with her sisters and brothers.

Berniss graduated from Armstrong High School in the "Class of 1944". After graduating high school, she entered Virginia Union University and graduated in 1949 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics. She joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in 1946 and took great joy in being President of the Beta Epsilon Chapter. After graduating from Virginia Union, Berniss began her life-long passion as a mathematics teacher at Manassas Regional High School. After eighteen months she returned home to Richmond and began her 35 year career in the Richmond Public School System. During her tenure, she served in a variety of capacities-Chairperson of the Mathematics Department, Sponsor of the National Junior Honor Society and in 1983, she was named Armstrong High School Teacher of the Year.

On June 16, 1951 Berniss was joined in holy matrimony to the late Edward "Ned" Carter Byrd. Ned was the love of her life and truly her best friend. They were married for 66 years and out of this union was born their only child, Beverly P. Byrd.

Berniss accepted Christ at an early age and was baptized at Fifth Street Baptist Church where she was a faithful member for over 80 years. She was

blessed by serving as Founder and President of the Ladies Usher Board II, Director of the Church School, Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education, Esther Bible Class teacher and was currently serving as a Deacon. In reflecting on her life, she once wrote, "I can't remember when I did not enjoy being a member of Fifth Street Baptist Church!"

Nothing was more important to Berniss than family. She was proud of instilling independence in Beverly, which allowed her to venture to New York to start her banking career and met her future husband Steve. For over the last 20 years, Berniss has enjoyed spending birthdays, holidays, and graduations with her two granddaughters, Kristen and Danielle; they were truly the apples of her eye!

Berniss leaves to cherish her memory a loving and devoted daughter, Beverly B. Mills (Stephen); two grandchildren, Kristen N. Mills (Stephen M. Yingling) and Danielle A. Mills; one brother, Dana E. Payne; seven nieces, Arlene Knight, Willi Ann Williams, Paulette Williams, Diane H. Pierce (Raymond), Allison G. Payne, Sandra W. Davis, and Denise W. Garcia (Manuel); two nephews, Russell M. Williams, Jr. (Janice) and Ralph K. Williams; and a host of great nieces, great nephews, family and friends.

Previous Events

viewing

AUG 28. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Ave.
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Remains lie in state

AUG 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

5th Street Baptist Church
2800 3rd Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Omega Omega Service

AUG 29. 10:30 AM (ET)

5th Street Baptist Church
2800 3rd Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Service

AUG 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

5th Street Baptist Church
2800 3rd Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Tribute Wall



“ *Berniss Payne Byrd*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Berniss Payne Byrd.*



August 28, 2018 at 09:07 PM



“ *Ronald C. Hayden lit a candle in memory of Berniss Payne Byrd*



Ronald C. Hayden - August 28, 2018 at 07:33 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Berniss Payne Byrd.*



August 27, 2018 at 11:02 PM

OR

“ *Our deepest condolences, Tara, Kris and Reece purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Berniss Payne Byrd.*



Our deepest condolences, Tara, Kris and Reece - August 27, 2018 at 04:15 PM



“ *Beautiful Whisper was purchased for the family of Berniss Payne Byrd.*



August 26, 2018 at 11:24 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Berniss Payne Byrd.*



August 25, 2018 at 10:50 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - August 24, 2018 at 02:26 PM