



Elizabeth Berckbickler James

December 15, 1932 - April 19, 2017

Elizabeth Berckbickler James (Betsy), a longtime resident of Leesburg, died Wednesday evening, April 19 surrounded by her children and grandchildren at Cornerstone Hospice in Lady Lake.

Betsy was born in Hartford, Alabama on December 15th, 1932. Despite the relatively small size of the town, two other girls were born that day-- with each of whom, Betsy built a lifelong friendship. As an only child, Betsy was raised by two strong women who precede her -- her grandmother, Valeila J. Huey and her mother, Frances H. Berckbickler.

Betsy graduated Valedictorian at Geneva County High school in 1950. In addition to academic excellence, Betsy was a trumpet player and drum major. After graduation, Betsy spent two years at Auburn University. She then transferred to FSU in 1952 where she joined the Chi Omega Sorority. Upon graduation, Betsy moved back to Alabama, where she began her social work career, placing foster and orphaned children in adoptive homes.

After living in Chicago, Betsy married Col. Edward James in 1960 and they with their five children lived and traveled from England to Jackson, MS to Milledgeville, GA then finally to Leesburg, FL where she spent the majority of her life. She is preceded by her husband, Col. Edward W. James.

Betsy was an avid traveler, visiting 6 of 7 continents and participating in travel programs such as the Friendship Force, Home exchanges, and the Sister City Exchange to Columbia. Betsy loved the performing arts and often took her children and grandchildren to events. Betsy was a known thrift shop

frequenter and a collector of novelties of all kinds. She was an active member of the Women's Club, the DAR, and the Republican Party. Betsy spearheaded The Opportunity Shop thrift store which over the years has supported members of the community in dire need. Betsy was a breast cancer survivor, a night owl, an accomplished seamstress, an epicurean, and a lover of books. Betsy was a FSU football fan, attending the National Championship in California in 2014. Betsy was a friend to everyone she met, an eternal optimist, and at the age of 69 she found and built relationships with a half brother and half sister whom she had never known before. Betsy was known for her bright pink lipstick, for speaking her mind, and for showing up to win bridge games.

Betsy is survived by 5 children and their spouses, Byrnes (Kim) James of Leesburg and Chattanooga, TN, Brooks (Jane) James Fruitland Park, Elizabeth J. (Steve) Knowles of Leesburg, Edward (Susan) James of Leesburg, William (Lisa) James of Fruitland Park; brother, John R. Berckbickler of Pittsburgh, PA and sister, Barb (Terry) Krysinski of Pittsburgh, PA; 13 grandchildren, Edward, John and William James; Brooks James; Sarah (Will) Baldwin, Mandy and Liam Knowles, Lee and Brynna Curry and Sadie Rae James; April and Corey Dean and Jamie (Josh) Pannelle; five great grandchildren, Ethan, Katelyn, Ryleigh, Soli and Riko all of whom brought her great joy and will miss her. A funeral service for Betsy will be held on Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 pm at St. James Episcopal Church with visitation on Saturday, April 22 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at Beyers Funeral Home Chapel, Leesburg. Burial will be in Lone Oak Cemetery following the funeral Service. For those who wish to contribute to Betsy's legacy, memorial donations may be made to Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center, 300 South Canal Street, Leesburg, FL 34748.

Tribute Wall

LS

“ *Eli, I am saddened to read the news of your mom's passing. My deepest condolences, sweet sister. May your heart and soul find peace and comfort. Love and hugs to you and your family, Linn*



Linn Signori - April 26, 2017 at 08:30 PM

WP

“ *We will miss Betsy. She was a delightful person and always made you feel at ease. I will always relish the nice dinner she had for Sarah Jean, Linda Lou & I before leaving the next day for our cruise. It was nice to reminiscent and talk about school days and living in Hartford, Alabama You will be missed by all who knew you. Love, Willa & Louie Parrish*

Willa Parrish - April 24, 2017 at 05:49 PM

JP

“ *I was so sorry to hear about your mother elizabeth. my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.*

jane pullum - April 23, 2017 at 08:14 PM

CA

“ *Deepest sympathy, especially to Elizabeth, Sarah Beth, Amanda, Susan, and Edward. Miss Betsy was a great lady and will be greatly missed. I remember how much help she was to me and my class when I taught her wonderful grandchildren. I never saw her that she didn't give me a wonderful smile. She was always so gracious. Blessings to all of her family.*

Carol Anderson - April 23, 2017 at 08:14 PM

BK

“ Lighting this candle for our fond memories of this wonderful lady.



Beth & Mark King, Robert & Shirley Wall, Janet V. King - April 23, 2017 at 03:08 PM

SH

“ Following is a quote I read in a book several days ago and it was so meaningful to me.



"When tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart.

For every time you think of me, I'm right here, in your heart."

Betsy will always hold a special place in my heart because she was more than my friend. We were "Mother's in Law" and I am so grateful and thankful that Edward in my other son.

All who knew Betsy were blessed by her friendship.

Someday we'll all be together again. The one wonderful thing about being a Christian is that we never have to say goodbye-we simply say "See you later."

Sue and Don Heishman - April 22, 2017 at 03:59 PM

SB

“ You will always be with us in our hearts, Bets!
We love you very much.



Sarah & Will Baldwin - April 22, 2017 at 11:46 AM

CK

“ *Betsy will live on in our hearts and in our memories forever. She treated everyone as her very own, and we were proud to be included as a part of her close family. She has blessed us all by being the special lady that she was. She will be missed! We love you.*



Cherie and David Knowles - April 21, 2017 at 12:26 AM

EL

“ xoxoxo



Elizabeth - April 20, 2017 at 09:34 PM

LL

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire family. So sorry for your great loss.
Love & prayers,
Lisa & Choy Lamb*



Lisa & Choy Lamb - April 20, 2017 at 02:58 PM