



## Katherine Ayash

August 11, 1929 - July 16, 2022

Katherine Isabel O'Brien was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta on August 11, 1929, to Ada and Louis O'Brien. One of seven children, "Skeeter" enjoyed a childhood full of the simple joys that come with having few worldly things. She was profoundly impacted by her Sunday School teacher, Ms. Mosse, and developed a faith she would never abandon. Working hard, she helped her mother stretch food for their meals, raised her two youngest sisters as if they were her own, and babysat outside the home for extra grocery money. Her favorite job was helping her father, a mechanic, sliding under the cars and scrambling for his tools. Long legs and elbows, he called her 'Skeeter' and made her feel like his favorite-- a special gift in a family with seven children.

Smart enough to skip ninth grade, she graduated high school early and declined a college scholarship to work for the Georgia Power Company and add to the family income. She could now buy fabric and as a talented seamstress delighted her sisters with dolls she made. She was a beauty in her own right, some said favoring the actress Lauren Bacall, and in 1950, a co-worker introduced her to William Ayash, a wonderful man who fell hard for her. He would become the love of her life and she chose well. They married in 1952 and Will did his best to spoil her for the rest of his life.

In the early days of marriage they lived with his mother, and it was not unusual

to decide on a Friday after work to drive to Panama City, fish all day Saturday and head back on Sunday with a cooler full of fish to share with his family, stopping only at their favorite place in Florida for fried catfish. In short order they saved enough to purchase a new home in East Atlanta and still managed to live off his paycheck and put hers in the bank. In 1953 she stopped working for the birth of their first daughter, Cynthia, followed by the birth of Linda in 1955. Like many families, Will drove the only car to work while she stayed at home to care for their children. It would always be ingrained in her not to waste food; she would fry up breakfast eggs with just enough white to set the egg and then use the extra egg whites to bake up an angel food cake to share warm from the oven. She kept house, had a hot dinner waiting every day for Will at 4:30, sang in the church choir... and sang whenever she was happy, which was often.

In 1958 with two young daughters at home, she intuitively established 'Miss Kathy's Kindergarten,' in her basement. Will built out a classroom with bookshelves, a separate side entrance, and customized most of their basement area. She developed a curriculum approved by the local elementary school and obtained a permit from the Dekalb County Health Department. Given her love of children it was a natural fit; she adored her students and prepared them for their first years of formal learning. It would be more than thirty years before the Georgia school systems would recognize the importance of kindergarten and institute it as a prerequisite for first graders.

In 1964 she made the tough decision to close her kindergarten in order to help operate a grocery store they purchased; Will was working as a traffic engineer in the daytime and at the store in the evenings. Her love for children resurfaced of course, hiring young pickpockets to sweep out the store or manage other tasks to earn money for the food they tried to steal.

Katherine stayed actively involved with her own daughters' education and

served as PTA President at Sky Haven Elementary for several years running. With great ideas and strong opinions, she was generally regarded as a force of nature --certainly no one refused her request to 'volunteer'!

Her quick Irish temper was countered by her big heart. Will started his own traffic signal company and as they prospered their generosity increased. At one point she brought home a young homeless man. Not caring that he ruined her sofa, she let him sleep in the family room for several weeks while she found him his own living quarters.

Will once confided that one reason he married her was because he never knew what to expect when he came home. She obtained her license to sell real estate and while other women might hide the purchase of a pair of shoes, on more than one occasion she bought a rental house without telling him until she had a rent deposit check in hand.

Once the girls were grown, they traveled to numerous foreign countries with friends, always excited to learn about diverse cultures and customs. The world was their oyster for as long as they were able to enjoy it. They doted on their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Katherine loved her family fiercely and maintained her abiding faith in God. When Will passed away at age 95, her life would never be the same. She felt half of her had gone missing. When you visited you might interrupt a conversation with God on that very topic, concluding with the question of when her turn might come. On July 9th, 2022, an arterial blood clot in her left leg revealed itself and would eventually travel up her body to her heart. July 16th, holding hands with family members, she was blessed with her answer and released into the arms of Jesus. Katherine is survived by her youngest sisters, Sharon Thorne and Donna Kent, daughters Cynthia Ayash Julian and

Linda Ayash Roberts, grandson Jeramie Ayash Julian, granddaughter Lauren Roberts Hale (Jonathan) and two great-grandchildren: Natalie Trammel and Weston Hale.

She loved flowers and she loved children! Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 - using ID#23027157, or go to the site [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org) and fill out their notification address for Linda Roberts at 1255 Land O Lakes Drive, Roswell, GA. 30075. Condolences may be submitted on-line at [www.scotward.com](http://www.scotward.com). Scot Ward Funeral Services, 699 American Legion Road, Conyers, GA 30012, 770-483-7216.

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Born to Scottish and Irish parents, Katherine was a true American beauty who worked hard, played hard and lived the American Dream. Most striking is the fact that she lived life on her own terms:

- If she didn't like you, you knew it.
- She never let the truth get in the way of a good story.
- When giving a child a gift, there was a duty to open it and play with it first (she remained a child at heart her entire life).
- Dessert was meant to be eaten first; and
- Turning ninety means you don't have to do anything you don't want to do!

Skeeter/Sister/Mama/Miss Kathy/Grammy,

We 'love you to pieces!'

The song has ended but the melody lingers on...

Irving Berlin



## Cemetery Details

Private funeral service will be held for the immediate family.

## Previous Events

### Visitation

JUL 23. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Scot Ward Funeral Services at Green Meadow Memorial Gardens  
699 American Legion Road  
Conyers, GA 30012

# Tribute Wall



“ 55 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Scot Ward Funeral Services - July 20, 2022 at 03:48 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Katherine Ayash.



July 19, 2022 at 02:55 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Katherine Ayash.



July 19, 2022 at 10:06 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Cindy Hays** - July 18, 2022 at 06:09 PM



*This was her last class-1963-64. She instilled in me a life-long love of learning. I will never forget her brilliant mind and her kind heart. We were with her when President Kennedy was assassinated. That moment will always be imprinted in my memory. I will always be grateful for her. Prayers of comfort for her family and thanksgiving for her life.*

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**Cindy Hays** - July 18, 2022 at 06:15 PM



*Oh the memories from Ms. Kathy's Kindergarten. I remember my first day. I couldn't believe my Mom dropped me off and left me with this woman I didn't know and I was such a scared, homesick little girl. Ms. Kathy was so patient and after that first day, I couldn't wait to go back. She was the most loving, patient lady. She started my love of learning and it stayed with me throughout my school years. What a foundation she gave her students! I will always be thankful I had the opportunity to be a graduate of Ms. Kathy's Kindergarten. May our Lord wrap your family in his loving arms and bring you peace and comfort during this difficult time. You'll miss her, but know that she is reunited with her "love" and the heavenly celebration must have been wonderful! Her memories will live in your hearts and she will always be with you and those of us who were lucky enough to have been her students.*

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**Lesla Lancaster** - July 18, 2022 at 08:49 PM