



## Mary Elizabeth Traynor

September 7, 1930 - January 18, 2023

Dr. Betsy Traynor, psychiatrist and resident of Guntersville since 1979, died peacefully early on Wednesday, January 18, 2023. She was 92.

Born in Manhattan on September 7, 1930, and christened Mary Elizabeth Meyer, she was called Betsy from the start. The oldest child of three of Philip Randolph Meyer and Mary Elizabeth Gedney, she was predeceased by her brother, Philip Randolph Meyer Jr. in 1955, and is survived by her sister, Jane Meyer Gill of Brooklyn NY.

Betsy found her purpose in life at a young age, instilled from her Roman Catholic Catechism: "To Know, Love, and Serve God." Her profound and unwavering faith was her mainstay, the strength behind a remarkable life of service to God, her family, her patients, and many others.

Though born in Manhattan, Betsy's father, Philip, was a WWI veteran Army pilot. At the start of WWII, Philip was called up to train young pilots in Mobile. The years the family spent there made a deep impression on the teenage Betsy. She had a love of Alabama all of her life. She majored in pre-med and biology. at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT. Betsy was determined to continue her studies all the way to becoming a psychiatrist in order to help people in every way she could.

While in Medical School in Brooklyn NY, she met her husband, John Traynor. Together, Betsy and John Traynor were able to begin to fulfill a lifelong dream of a large family. After their eldest child Catherine was born in Brooklyn, they moved to Chicago, where Betsy continued her medical studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. By the time she earned her MD, she was the mother of identical twins, John & Philip, and another daughter, Mimi.

The family moved to Guntersville in 1959. While John worked in Huntsville, Betsy did her internship at Holy Name of Jesus Hospital in Gadsden. She was a practitioner on call in Guntersville too, including delivering many babies, who may still live here as adults.

Her daughter Elizabeth and son Thomas were born in Guntersville. In 1962, the growing family moved to Wilmington Delaware; John had a job with DuPont, and Betsy went into private practice as a general practitioner. Margaret, then Paul were born right before Betsy started her residency in psychiatry at the Delaware State Hospital. While living in physician housing on the hospital grounds, Jerry was born.

In 1966, the Traynor family finally settled in a large house in Wilmington DE. Betsy was a busy psychiatrist in the city while Julia (deceased) and James were born. In 1972, she gave birth to the last of her 12 children, Peter. A journalist writing an article about her once asked "Did you really want so many kids?" Her answer was, "I always wanted ten. The last two were bonuses!" Through all of this, Betsy's remarkable dedication toward her three life services, God, Family, and Medicine, never wavered.

Betsy and John Traynor divorced in 1979. That summer, Betsy came across an ad for a greatly needed psychiatrist in Guntersville and Scottsboro. She

applied and was hired as the Medical Director of the Marshall-Jackson Mental Health Clinic in Guntersville (now Mountain Lakes). She moved back to Guntersville in the fall with her six youngest children, who all attended Guntersville schools.

For 20 years, Dr. Betsy Traynor was the only psychiatrist in the 2 counties of Marshall and Jackson. She was so happy to be fulfilling her calling to help the mental health of so many underserved citizens.

Betsy married Charles Duckett (deceased) in 1988. And after 20 years at the clinic, with her children grown, she went into private practice at her Center for Psychiatry and Brief Therapy on Gunter Avenue in Guntersville. She finally retired at age 83!

Dr. Betsy Traynor served thousands of patients in Alabama through the years and was beloved by many. In 2016 she married her best friend, Paul Gayle. Paul had been a loving and faithful companion for many years, and has remained so. Their marriage gave her great joy.

Toward the end, Betsy marveled that she had ended up spending the majority of her life in Alabama. She loved her home on the lake, boating, her sweet poodle Molly and her dear Pomeranian, Little Bear. Gardening was her passion. Most of all, she loved her family and God. Her deep commitment to God never wavered; she attended daily Mass throughout her entire life, including at St. Williams Catholic Church in Guntersville for over 43 years. She recently told her daughter Elizabeth, of Guntersville, "Oh, I'm not afraid of dying! I can't wait to see God."

Betsy Traynor is survived by her husband Paul Gayle; 11 of her 12 children,

28 grandchildren - and she was delighted by her 13 young great-grandchildren.

She valued family ties, near and far, especially her stepdaughter Deborah Duckett Robichaux, her cousins Anne, Vicky, and John and her recently ordained young cousin, Father A.J. Gedney. She leaves behind many who loved her dearly and respected her immensely.

The public is invited to the funeral for Betsy Traynor at St. William's Catholic Church, 929 Gunter Avenue in Guntersville, on Thursday, January 26. There will be a visitation and viewing at 9:30 a.m. followed by the funeral Mass at 11 a.m. Burial to follow.

# Cemetery Details

## Crestview Cemetery

Guntersville, AL

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 26. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. William Catholic Church  
929 Gunter Avenue  
Guntersville, AL 35976  
fr.tim@stwilliamchurch.com  
<http://www.stwilliamchurch.com/>

## Service

JAN 26. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. William Catholic Church  
929 Gunter Avenue  
Guntersville, AL 35976  
fr.tim@stwilliamchurch.com  
<http://www.stwilliamchurch.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *What an inspiring person. I worked with her in Scottsboro and later in Guntersville. I admired her dedication to her patients .*

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**Jane Waites** - February 24, 2023 at 10:11 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Mary Elizabeth Traynor.*



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January 24, 2023 at 05:18 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Elizabeth Traynor.*



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January 21, 2023 at 02:34 PM