



## Rosemary Miller

June 23, 1926 - February 8, 2019

Rosemary Ryan Miller passed away in her sleep, a blessedly quiet exit earned after a long, full and sometimes trying life on Friday, February 8, 2019. She was 92, and in declining health, had resided at Hillside Nursing & Rehab of Wake Forest, NC since 2013. What she packed into those years when she could still drive! Wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, she was a Cleveland West-side Irish Catholic force of nature. Rosemary gave her days and her heart to the people she loved and principles that guided her life. With her children mostly grown and husband retired, she became a late-in-life career woman and college student, dedicated community volunteer and Associate to the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. Wherever she lived, she attended mass most days. She craved dignity and approval, relished a good laugh, had a flair for martyrdom and often referred to herself as “God’s Clown.” She lived her faith with warmth and humor. Hokey jokes, pots of homemade soup, fresh-baked pies and crocheted baby blankets, these were her sacred offerings to celebrate life’s passages. Creatively gifted, she could inspect the seams of a dress and make it, turn out an elegant dinner for 20, read a novel in a day, whistle with mockingbird’s skill. She loved to talk and to sew, the color red, movie musicals and most holidays, a good bargain, new shoes, travel, old jazz, the sound of young Frank Sinatra’s voice, voting for the Democrats. Inordinately proud of her children’s successes, she was unlimited both in her opinions and desire to share the most recent batch of family photos. When her children misbehaved, even well into adulthood, she’d send a donation to the Poor Clares nuns, inciting a long-running joke about which offspring was the current “special intention.” She was well and fiercely loved by her entire family and network of friends, even though she doubted it, and she did things her way right up to her last day. Born in Cleveland, OH, to Charles and Mary Elizabeth Ryan, Rosemary was the youngest of five children. She long outlived her parents and siblings, but carried the scars of a painful childhood marked by alcoholism, abuse and the anxieties of growing up in the wake of the Great Depression. When she graduated from St. Michael’s High School in 1942, she had already met the love of her life. During WWII, her parents opened spare rooms in their home to members of the military training at Cleveland Diesel, and a handsome young chief petty officer, a Southerner named Vernon “Pete” Miller, appeared on the doorstep. She was 16 then, 19 when they wed in the parish

rectory. As individuals they could not have differed more, yet their love was a battle well-matched. Marriage took her from Cleveland to make homes in Morristown, NJ, back to Lakewood, OH, and eventually to Columbia, SC, where they retired in 1979. After 18 years of marriage, Pete converted to Catholicism, but their political differences remained irreconcilable. They faithfully cancelled each other's votes in every election and had four children over 19 years — only during Democratic administrations, she fondly noted. Their union endured 50 years until he died of lung cancer in 1996. She sent a son to the Vietnam war while still parenting a teenager, kindergartner and toddler. She nursed her husband through a crippling car accident in 1976, and multiple bouts of cancer after. No wonder she remained a worrier. After years of being defined as someone's wife or mother, Rosemary went back to work in her 50s, enjoying a series of high level administrative jobs in the food industry in Columbia, SC. She took literature and writing courses at the University of South Carolina, became a docent at the Woodrow Wilson House and patient advocate at Providence Hospital. This was truly joyful and meaningful work, and in 2011, Providence Hospital honored her with induction to their Heritage Society. At 85, she grudgingly moved an independent living facility in Athens GA, which she wryly dubbed "Castle of the Dead." Even there she made many friends, as she also did at Hillside Nursing. Faith, love and laughter marked most of the days of her life, and she was never without family who loved her. She is preceded in death by her husband, Vernon Reid Miller, and son, Stephen Charles Miller. Surviving are her daughter-in-law Toni (Maschek) Miller of Durham; sons, Jeffrey Reid (Maureen Glynn) Miller of Athens, GA and Dr. Peter Daniel Miller (Ann LeCron) of Hickory, NC, daughter, Mary E. Miller (Bob Geolas) of Raleigh. She has 11 grandchildren and three, soon to be four, great-grandchildren. The family will celebrate Rosemary Miller's life at a noon mass on Feb. 21st at St. Frances of Rome Catholic Church, Sparta, NC, followed by a burial service in the family plot in Laurel Springs, NC. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Poor Clares Monastery, 3501 Rocky River Drive, Cleveland, OH 44111. Grandview Memorial Funeral Home is proudly serving the Miller family and if you wish, online condolences may be submitted to the family at [www.grandviewfuneralhome.com](http://www.grandviewfuneralhome.com).

# Cemetery

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## Miller Family Cemetery

Graveyard Road

Laurel Springs, NC, 28644

# Events

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**FEB** **Funeral Mass** 12:00PM

**21**

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St. Frances of Rome Catholic Church

29 Highland Drive, Sparta, NC, US, 28675

# Comments

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“ Bobby And Nancy Wooten lit a candle in memory of Rosemary Miller



**Bobby and Nancy Wooten** - February 21 at 02:41 PM