



Mrs. Alice Lydia Betz

May 24, 1930 - March 13, 2024

Alice Lydia Betz (née Clement) passed away early in the morning of Wednesday, March 13th at the age of 93. She is survived by her sons, Donald Jr. and Steven, her sister, Patricia, many nieces and nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and an irritable chihuahua named Bebe. She was predeceased by her husband, Donald Sr., sons Michael and David, sister Betty, and her granddaughter Brooke.

Alice grew up in Baltimore and married her teenage sweetheart, Don, my grandfather, in 1949. Their first date was on mischief night five years prior, when they were both still in high school. I'm writing all of this down decades after the fact and trying to piece together their lives, so some bits may be wrong, but maybe family lore is not too different from family fact anyway.

When she was younger, Alice was a florist. She and her sister Pat founded Ocean City Florist, a business still in operation today. But, aside from a few entrepreneurial craft projects (like selling wreaths and hair barrettes at the state fairgrounds), she was mostly a stay-at-home mom. Don and Alice had four boys and lived, throughout their lives, in Hamilton, Govans, Parkville, Towson, and Jacksonville, Maryland. For a few years in the 1960s, they bought and moved into the Potato City Motor Inn, a small hunting lodge in Coudersport, Pennsylvania. The Inn was demolished in 2018, a couple years after Don passed away, but while they were there, they allegedly had a pet

monkey, named Judy, and a pet sheep, named George, and Alice insisted that the monkey would ride around on the sheep.

In the fall of 1969, Don and Alice moved into a house on Green Glade Road in Jacksonville and I think that's where Alice spent the most joyful years of her life. She loved gardening and grew giant, bright pink azaleas by the driveway and blueberry bushes in the backyard. A family of feral cats lived nearby and she scattered tin trays of food around the porches to keep them fed. She took pride in her orchids, the flower becoming iconically linked to her. In the summers, they'd set up the grill and the slip-and-slide and order a few bushels of crabs. Cars filled the driveway and Alice would make one of those big American flag sheet cakes with blueberries as stars and sliced strawberries as stripes.

Christmases at Green Glade were chaotic. The whole house smelled like wood and wrapping paper burning in the fireplace. All of Alice's grandchildren ran around in the matching puffy paint sweatshirts she made us. The windows were lined with poinsettias from the Amish market and those battery-operated singing and dancing Santas were everywhere, surrounded by fake snow. Don kept making Alice gin and tonics and she kept making us pose for photos. She'd drop dozens of rolls of film off at the Ritz Camera in the Hunt Valley Mall, asking for duplicates to put in all of the albums she dedicated to each grandchild.

In the calmer moments, I remember her ironing Don's shirts to crisp perfection in their bedroom, the smell of Niagara Spray Starch and the sound of daytime soaps stretching through the house. I remember her bedside table, with the giant container of Tums from Sam's Club and the half empty bottle of Deer Park spring water. Alice believed in three cure-alls: Tums, Aspirin, and aloe vera gel. She bought them all in bulk. Before Don got home, she would curl her hair and spritz a little L'air du Temps. They'd go for dinner at the

Peppermill, Pierce's, the Manor Tavern, or the Fox and the Hound in the Four Corners shopping center.

Alice and Don lived on Green Glade for 35 years before they downsized and moved to Towson. After Don died in 2015, Alice never completely recovered. At that point, they had been together as a couple for over sixty years. Losing her sons, Mike and Dave, over the past few years was also incredibly difficult for her. And when she moved into hospice care at Stella Maris, living away from family for the first time in her entire life, I think everyone could tell she felt ready to rejoin all of the family and friends she lost throughout the years. She'd often say she felt like the only one left.

When I last visited her at Stella Maris on March 3rd, she was in and out of consciousness, but she asked whether anyone had ever moved into "our house." I said they had, and she said that was good. Then she said, "Seems like we were only there for a short while, then all of a sudden we're gone."

A Memorial Service in Alice's honor will be held at 12:00 PM on Sunday, April 7th at the Chestnut Pavilion at Gunpowder Falls State Park (Hammerman Area). Everyone is welcome. Please feel free and encouraged to bring along a favorite dish, photos, and memories. We'll have grills set up and we look forward to being with you all.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 7. 12:00 PM (ET)

Gunpowder Falls State Park (Hammerman Area)
7200 Graces Quarter Rd
Middle River, MD 21220

Chestnut Pavillion