



Mrs. Mary Eaton Backer (nee Bruce)

December 19, 1927 - January 15, 2023

95 years old, born in Lakeland, Florida, Mary Eaton Backer (nee Bruce) passed away peacefully in her sleep, at her Cedarcroft home in Baltimore, Maryland on January 15, 2023, due to the ongoing effects of COPD. Living a full and meaningful life, she was the beloved wife of John Matthew Backer, devoted mother of Trish Backer-Miceli, dear grandmother of Alexandra and Augustine John Miceli, loving sister of the late Daniel E. and Samuel G. Bruce, and is survived by numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. Mary was a friend to many, and her conversation, humor and intelligence will be missed by all who knew her. She had a passion for reading and learning and was an avid gardener. For Mary, the word “gardening” meant getting one’s hands dirty in the soil. Domestically, she knew fabrics and was an accomplished seamstress and quilter and belonged to a quilting club for many years. A hobby was searching for and reading new recipes. Occasionally they were cooked.

Parents, Samuel Gordon Bruce, a government worker, and Mary Shinholser Bruce, a homemaker, relocated often due to employment changes during the early 20th century’s depression. As a result, Mary, when asked, “Where are you from?” would always reply, “Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.” Maryland was added to that list after her marriage to John. They were introduced by friends while he was the explosive ordnance disposal officer aboard minesweepers based in Charleston, South Carolina. A very short

engagement was followed by a Charleston marriage which her friends believed would never last. Mary outlived and proved them wrong, for during this past November, Mary and John celebrated their 65th Anniversary.

Mary's work career was varied, and she often chose positions that interested her and furthered her learning. Starting at a young age to help put food on the table, she was unable to graduate high school. However, her intelligence, perseverance, and continuous learning led her to employment in industry, law, advertising and academia (Johns Hopkins University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Later, in her 40's, she obtained a real estate license and was proud to work with one of Baltimore's premiere real estate firms for many years.

Experience at laboratories in industry and at universities gave Mary a serious interest in medical research. For many years, she participated at Johns Hopkins as a control in long-term studies of Alzheimer's and of Parkinson's disease. Mary chose to donate her brain and body to Johns Hopkins for this important research.

Burial will be private. A celebration of life will be held at the Country Club of Maryland on Sunday, May 7th from 1-3. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Mary's memory to the Maryland SPCA or Gilchrist Hospice Care, Inc.

On January 15, 2023 Mary Eaton Backer (nee Bruce), beloved wife of John Matthew Backer; dear mother of Mary Patricia "Trish" Backer-Miceli (Augustine); dear grandmother of Alexandra E. and Augustine J. Miceli, Loving sister of the late Daniel E. and Samuel G. Bruce. Also survived by nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Country Club of Maryland on Sunday,

May 7th from 1-3 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorials in Mary's name may be made to Maryland SPCA or Gilchrist Hospice Care Inc.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 7. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Country Club of Maryland
1101 Stevenson Lane
Baltimore, MD 21286

Tribute Wall

DB

“ I had the pleasure of meeting Mary in the hospital. she wanted to meet new people that were young and I was her first and was honored to be the first one. she was a no nonsense kind of lady and I really liked that about her. we exchanged phone numbers and talked about everything we could ,like birds , flowers, our lives, our children, and grand children. She made me feel like a special person in her life .She made me laugh and I hope that I made her smile as well. I'm so sorry for your loss. John thank you for thinking of me and calling me to let me know when her service is.I am looking forward to seeing you again and your daughter Trish on the 7 th of may. Your friend Danna Bucalo.

danna Bucalo - April 26, 2023 at 05:26 PM

SB

“ When you were a baby your parents lived on Cedric Road in Fairmount Park in West Baltimore. I was actually your babysitter when you were quite young and I was a young teenager. I remember your parents as warm, loving people and we were all sorry when they moved away. I hope that you have decades of wonderful memories.

Susan Bass

Susan Bass - March 05, 2023 at 11:20 AM

BG

“ Trisha, I am so sorry to hear of your mother's passing. She was a beautiful person inside and out. I will treasure all the memories of growing up together with you and how she would watch over us and just smile when we would misbehave. May you find strength in your memories. Hugs and prayers. Beth Schuler Groves.

Beth Groves - January 23, 2023 at 08:55 AM