



Shirley C. Byrnes

June 24, 1932 - January 18, 2021

Shirley C. Byrnes, 88, Topeka, Kansas, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Wednesday, January 18, 2021.

Shirley was born on June 24, 1932, in Osage City, Kansas, the only child of Bill and Bess Cleland. She lived in many places as a child, as her father moved about the country as federal bank auditor. Shirley often spent summers with her grandparents, Lolly and Papa Frank of Hoyt, Kansas. She attended Kansas State University where she met and married Tom O'Boyle. Shirley graduated and was married in 1953. They had three children, Terry, Randy and Kathleen. Shirley moved around the Midwest with her husband, raising the kids and teaching, while he coached football. In 1967, she divorced and moved to Topeka. She married her life-long love, Jim Byrnes in 1969 and settled into a wonderful life in Topeka.

Shirley had a tremendous love of American history and taught that subject at various Topeka schools including Jardine Junior high and later at Seaman High School. She loved Mt. Vernon and everything about George and Martha Washington, making many trips to see their house. Shirley was a world traveler and dragged Jim along on as many trips as she could. When he wouldn't go, Shirley found ways to go without him, usually taking along Kathleen or Terry. Her dear friend, Joyce DeCoursey, helped her get a part-time job as a secret traveler for TWA, where she traveled the world, evaluating

cabin crew service. Shirley later took a job with Washburn University and worked in their business programs office where, among other things, she was in charge of arranging and hosting many guest speakers for their programs. This was a job Shirley truly loved.

Shirley could have been a twin of Lucille Ball. Her life seemed like a never-ending episode of I Love Lucy. Shirley loved westies and could always be found walking around their neighborhood on Oakley Ave with a westie in tow. She loved her only grandson Conor O'Boyle, who thought grandma was a real hoot.

Shirley and Jim were very social and loved their friends in Topeka - the DeCoursey's, Evan's, Reardon's and Pope's to name a few. They loved their neighborhood friends and their Most Pure Heart of Mary community.

Shirley is survived by her son, Randy O'Boyle; daughter, Kathleen Hershner; grandson, Conor O'Boyle; and her cousin, Beth, who was like a little sister to her. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Jim, and child, Terry O'Boyle.

Her arrangements are being handled by the Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Shirley wished to be cremated and buried with Jim at Mount Calvary Cemetery. A celebration of her life will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made at MountVernon.org or sent in care of the funeral home.

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com.

Cemetery Details

Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd
Topeka, KS 66606

Tribute Wall

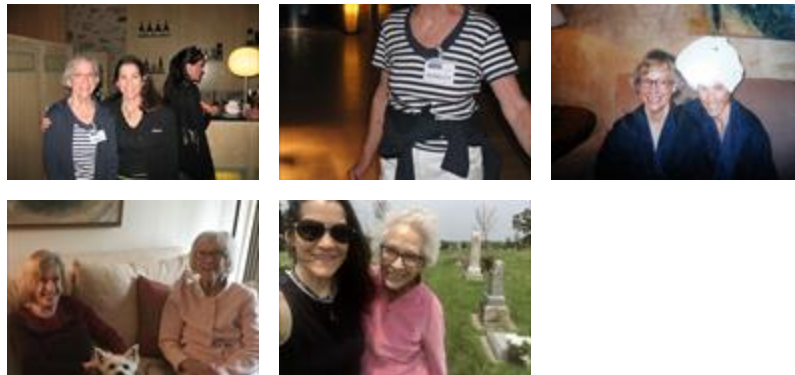


“ *Shirley C. Byrnes*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *5 files added to the album Memories Album*



Kathleen Hershner - January 21, 2021 at 10:29 PM



*I was so sorry and yet relieved for you all to hear of Shirley s passing.
Hugs to you and your families Randy and Kathleen
Lovingly
Betty Cleland*

betty cleland - January 22, 2021 at 02:22 PM



You are in my prayers

betty cleland - January 22, 2021 at 02:31 PM

MP

“ Dan and I spent many hours with Shirley and Jim. They were close friends and were wonderful neighbors. Shirley and I walked the neighborhood almost daily for years after school. Shirley was so fun and we laughed a lot!!

When Dan and I moved to Overland Park, KS we still kept in touch. We gathered a group of friends and formed a dinner group and traveled to Kansas City, Topeka and Atchison, KS. More good times!! Obviously all good times come to an end!! But it was a wonderful ride!!

Miss her and am so happy I am able to visit with her daughter, Kathleen, when she comes to Kansas.

My condolences to all.

Mary Pope

Mary T Pope - January 21, 2021 at 02:36 PM

KH

Wonderful recollections, Mary. I remember all of those crazy walks around the neighborhood at night. We were so lucky to have such fun and lively neighbors like you and Dan and your kids. You've been a real friend to me through this awful final phase of her life. I'm so happy I was able to visit you so frequently during my visits to Topeka. I'm relieved that Mom's saga through Alzheimers finally ended. See you soon and we'll raise a glass (or three) and have plenty of laughs remembering Shirley's unusual activities and way of being! :-)

Kathleen Hershner - January 21, 2021 at 10:09 PM

SH

Perhaps in the late Seventies, I taught with Shirley at Northern Hills Junior High School. I thoroughly enjoyed her personality, and her love of history (as mentioned in the obituary) was reflected in her excellent teaching.

On a few occasions, I was invited to Shirley and Jim's classy home on Oakley Street. I was admittedly a bit jealous of the home's "House Beautiful" perfection. One time, I mentioned that I was looking for a tall antique Bible stand. "Draw me a picture of what you want, and I'll eventually find it for you," said Shirley.

I responded, "Well, I'm not an artist, Shirley."

Shirley quipped, "Steve, I didn't ask you to be Mr. Leonardo da Vinci. A rough sketch will do nicely. I'll get you some paper and a pencil."

Within a few weeks, Shirley said, "A Catholic church closed out at Willard. There was an auction, and I have the perfect lectern for you."

It was perfect, and it still resides in my condo. See why I enjoyed teaching with Shirley? What a neat lady!

*Steve Henry (former colleague)
Topeka, KS*

Steve Henry - January 24, 2021 at 09:20 AM

JS

So glad you chose this picture. What a smile and twinkle in her eyes. That is how we will always remember her. It is also the reason it was such fun to be around her. Witty, kind, full of life and ideas, enthusiastic. She and Jim were long-time dental patients of Herschel's. He and his staff always looked forward to their visits. Wonderful couple. We know that you, Randy and Kathleen, will miss them very much and we send to each of you our deepest sympathy. It was certainly our good fortune to have had them in our lives. Jacque and Herschel Stroud

Jacque & Herschel Stroud - January 24, 2021 at 08:12 PM