



Margaret Gignilliat Carswell

December 13, 1931 - January 15, 2021

“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed.”

Proverbs 31: 25 – 28

Margaret Gignilliat Carswell, 89, passed away peacefully on Jan. 15, 2021 in Columbia, South Carolina. Peggy, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Heyward Gignilliat, was born on Dec. 13, 1931 in Phoenix, Arizona. She grew up in Savannah, Georgia, where she graduated from The Pape School. Peggy then received her Bachelor of Arts degree in art from Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. She left her mark in Virginia by painting a mural in a wing of the children’s hospital. Her beautiful paintings from her years at Mary Baldwin now grace the homes of her three daughters.

Peggy was a loving and devoted mother, wife, daughter, sister, grandmother, aunt, godmother, and friend. She viewed others as more important than herself, evidenced with a lifetime of selfless service. She was, indeed, a remarkable person of great character who lived each day striving to love God with all of her heart, soul, mind, and strength.

During her lifetime in Savannah, she spent years volunteering for The Colonial Dames, using her exceptional gardening gifts in the gardens of the Andrew Low House where she was a familiar face among the pansies. She was a member the Junior League, the Trustees Garden Club (Garden Club of America), and passionately tended the roses for the Fragrant Garden for the Blind in Forsyth Park.

Peggy was known for her lovely manners and gentle, ladylike demeanor. She also possessed frugal money managing skills. She used to have a charge account at Yeoman’s on Bay Street, the old flea market where Peggy could be found uncovering unique treasures. When she found items that no longer worked (“They just don’t make them like this anymore”), she dropped them off at Hagins, a repair shop that used to be on Bull

Street ... where she also had a charge account! The end result was often a truly valuable find, like a vintage, yet broken Singer sewing machine for \$5 that was fixed for \$1.

While her daughters playfully rolled their eyes over what came traipsing through the front door on any given day, it was this frugality that allowed the family to buy a farm. At this farm, Peggy's true passion for serving others shone its brightest. She fed crowds, both large and small, from the old farm kitchen, detached from the main house by an outdoor porch and equipped with a wood-burning stove. When the crowds became too large to serve for a seated meal, she resorted to her famous venison stew, her special recipe that was never prepared the same way twice and that never disappointed. She also fed countless children who descended on the farm in droves for the family's much-loved campouts.

Peggy greeted and entertained all their guests, including the feathered and furry ones who often took refuge in her loving care if orphaned or injured. Her daughters naively thought all families had makeshift animal shelters at home for squirrels, rabbits, wild turkeys, turtles, starlings, blue jays, and more. Peggy's devotion to serve others above herself was cultivated from her close relationship with God. She greatly enjoyed church life, as well as Bible studies, and tried daily to live out the example of Christ. Her life's ambition was to encourage her daughters to follow her same journey of walking in love and of understanding the freedom found in true forgiveness.

Surviving are her three daughters Margaret Carswell Richardson (Scott) of Hilton Head, South Carolina; Elizabeth Wright Carswell of Topeka, Kansas; and Emily Carswell Clay (Henry) of Columbia, South Carolina; as well as her brother, Thomas Heyward Gignilliat, Jr. (Patricia Carson) of Savannah, Georgia; grandchildren Scott Durden Richardson (Julie), Margaret Ravenel Richardson (Stephen), Margaret Gignilliat Clay, Mary Bryan Clay, and Helen Brevard Clay; and five great grandchildren Jackson, Emme, and Lucy Richardson, and Tess and Oliver Richardson. She was predeceased by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Heyward Gignilliat, as well as by her sister, Mary Ravenel (Polly) Gignilliat.

The graveside service at Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah will be officiated by Reverend Marc Robertson, retired priest of Christ Church Anglican and will be for immediate family only, due to COVID-19 limitations.

The family extends their heartfelt thanks to the extraordinary staff at Carroll Campbell Place and Laurel Crest, both in Columbia, South Carolina, where Peggy lived since 2013.

Before leaving Savannah, Peggy was involved with both Christ Church Anglican (2020 Bull St., Savannah, Georgia, 31401) and Independent Presbyterian Church (207 Bull St., Savannah, Georgia, 31401). Upon moving to Columbia in 2013, she joined First Presbyterian Church (1324 Marion St., Columbia, South Carolina, 29201). Thus, in lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to any of these three churches.