



Mrs. Mary McCraw Ruef

September 2, 1940 - September 24, 2021

Mary Elizabeth McCraw Ruef passed away on Friday, September 24 at her home in Columbia. She was born in Spartanburg, SC on September 2, 1940, to the Reverend D. D. McCraw and Velma Harriett Bridwell McCraw.

After attending Anderson College, Mary's first job was in the Washington office of 5th district South Carolina Congressman Thomas S. Gettys. She returned to Columbia where she held administrative positions in The State Hospital's rapidly growing psychology department located in the Hall Institute. During this time, she earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of South Carolina, which prepared her to teach business courses at Lexington High School.

Mary began her work as a professional fundraiser in 1984 when she was named the first Fundraising Coordinator for the new Children's Hospital at Richland Memorial. Mary helped create a large cadre of committed volunteers who worked with her on a variety of creative fundraising events. She was instrumental in making Children's Hospital part of the national Children's Miracle Network. Her commitment to health care is evidenced by her next position as the executive director of the Baptist Hospital Foundation.

Throughout her life, Mary and Lee made and kept many loyal friends. They loved to entertain. Mary set a beautiful table for dinner parties and mastered the art of gathering larger groups of old and new friends who enjoyed the Ruef's hospitality. She was a long-time member of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, where she was part of an excellent kitchen team well-known for preparing thousands of delicious meals every year.

Mary was predeceased by her parents; and brothers, Deever Daiten McCraw, Jr. and Joseph McCraw.

She is survived by her husband, Leland C. Ruef; beloved goddaughter, Elizabeth Kincaid Love Wallace of Tallahassee, FL; and sister, Velma Ruth McCraw Barbrey of Simpsonville, SC.

The family thanks long-time friend and housekeeper Bonnie Watson, Alex Walker, Tabitha Shannon, the clergy and staff of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, and Halcyon Hospice for their care.

A memorial service will be held at 11 o'clock Thursday, September 30th at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Columbia. Interment will follow in the Columbarium. A reception will be held under the oaks on the lawn. Masks are required inside the Cathedral.

A live stream of the service may be viewed by visiting the church website at <http://www.TrinitySC.org/Funerals>.

Memorials may be made to The Trinity Foundation, 1100 Sumter Street, Columbia SC 29201 or to PRISMA Health Children's Hospital, 7 Richland Medical Park, Suite 7129, Columbia, SC 29203.

Events

SEP **Memorial Service** 11:00AM
30

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
1100 Sumter St, Columbia, SC, US, 29201

Comments



“ Mary & I became friends our first days at Anderson College. Our friendship continued through all these years. Some of my favorite memories include our fun times together. I will surely miss her.

Ruth Meredith Lawrence - September 30 at 12:03 PM



“ Jan and I were sorry to hear about Mary's passing. Over the years we had many great times at her dinner parties and other events with Mary and Lee. Mary had a great personality and she was always a joy!

David Jordan - September 30 at 11:00 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with Lee and family. Mary was a special person. Although we have retired and don't get together like we did , Tracy and I often talk about our travels and the friends that we made on that phase of our life. Mary was and will be a part of those memories.

Robert F. Bird - September 29 at 09:34 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mary McCraw Ruef.



September 28 at 07:28 PM



“ My husband, Dr. Ben Galloway, and I go back many years with Mary and Lee. We actually knew Lee before he and Mary started dating but were thrilled when he met and married such a lovely young woman as Mary. We shared wonderful times in Columbia and they later visited us in Colorado which has been our home now for years. Lee was there for the birth of our first daughter, Cindy, born in Columbia in 1969 when my husband was serving in the Medical Corp at Ft. Jackson. We're sending Lee our love and will forever hold Mary in our hearts. Jean Galloway

Jean Marie Galloway - September 28 at 12:38 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mary McCraw Ruef.



September 28 at 11:57 AM



“ Spending time with Mary Ruef on travels with Independent Agents was a joy of my life. Mary's sharp wit and devastatingly funny side eye look kept us all laughing. Her love of Lee, her friends, and her church shone through all of our time together. Our prayers are with Lee, who is never far from our thoughts and we are grateful to have counted the indomitable Mary Ruef as a friend.

Jeff and Barbara Albright, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Jeff & Barbara Albright - September 28 at 11:35 AM



“ Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mary McCraw Ruef.



September 28 at 10:02 AM



“ Lee,

In these days near Mary's death the awareness of the passage of time and the certainty of mortality remind us to, as do songs and verses, "love who you love and say that you do." Mary was able to be successful in so many areas of personal interactions.

Rhoda and I offer condolences at this time proximate to Mary's death.

Jeff Brooker, MD - September 27 at 11:38 PM