



Berneil Baxter

March 26, 1925 - October 16, 2020

RICHMOND, Ind. – Berneil Baxter, age 95, of Richmond, Indiana, died Friday, October 16, 2020, at Friends Fellowship Community.

Berneil was born on March 26, 1925, to Raymond and Flossie Ochsenrider Heller on their farm near Bluffton, Indiana, the middle of five children. An event that greatly influenced Berneil's life was the death of her beloved "Daddy" when she was ten years old. Following her father's death, Berneil lived in Bluffton for two years with two, dear aunts. She often remembered that period of her life as a happy time, in spite of the loss of her father, because of the love showered on her by her aunts. Her mother found work and family support in Marion, Indiana, and Berneil was reunited with her siblings and went to school there, graduating from Marion High School in 1943.

During the last two years of World War II, Berneil left her home state and proudly served her country by working in the payroll office at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. She frequently spoke fondly of her time there, meeting people from all over the United States and dancing to the music of the big bands that came to entertain the troops. Her dance card was always full. Following the war, Berneil returned to Indiana and worked at the state employment office in Marion. Here she helped a local kid from Fairmount, Indiana, James Dean, prior to his acting career, apply for work that he didn't really want.

In 1949, Berneil married Merrill William "Bill" Baxter in Reverend Murray Johnson's living room. They became members of his church, Marion First Friends, which was a focal point for the family's life for the first twenty years of their marriage. Berneil worked until their first child, Jeff, came along, followed soon by daughters, Jane and then Connie. A few years later, the arrival of their fourth child, Kent, added joy to the family. Berneil kept a clean house and a neatly mown lawn, perfected her home cooking, and took primary responsibility for raising the four children, all while encouraging Bill as he started Indiana's second equipment and tool rental business. It was during these years that she supported Bill, keeping the family and home together, as he volunteered tirelessly to help found Friends Fellowship Community, a Quaker retirement community.

Once the children were established in school, Berneil returned to the workforce utilizing her secretarial skills, primarily in manufacturing settings. In 1971, she and Bill moved to Richmond, when he became employed as Administrator of Friends Fellowship Community. Berneil worked in the office at Richmond Industrial Supply Co., where she retired. Berneil faithfully volunteered on L6 at Reid Hospital every Monday for 26 years and was active in Kiwanianne Club. She was a member of Marion First Friends Church and had attended First Friends Meeting and Central United Methodist Church. Berneil enjoyed traveling, reading, cooking, and baking.

Berneil taught her children, by example, to be kind, respectful, honest, and hardworking and to value family and education. She was the best pie baker and no family gathering happened without two or three of her famous sugar cream pies in attendance. Berneil was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and a good and loyal friend and neighbor to many. She will be dearly missed.

Survivors include daughters, Martha Jane (Marshall) Akers of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Connie Jo (Greg Moschetti) Baxter of Dummerston, Vermont; sons, Jeffrey (Melissa) Baxter of Richmond and Kent (Dori) Baxter of Williamsburg, Indiana; many grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; brother, Keith Heller of Pennsylvania; nieces; nephews; cousins; and many friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Merrill William Baxter, who died May 16, 2002; grandson, Mark Baxter; sisters, Maxine Truex Sanders and Arlene Rayle; and brother, Ardith Heller.

Berneil's family wishes to express deepest gratitude to the compassionate and dedicated staff of Friends Fellowship Community, where she had lived since 1995, who provided excellent care and services to her.

A private, family service will be held for Berneil Baxter. A memorial service will be announced by the family at a later date. Private burial will be in Earlham Cemetery. Arrangements are being handled by Doan & Mills Funeral Home, 790 National Road West, Richmond.

It was Berneil's request that memorial contributions be made to: Friends Fellowship Community Endowment Fund, 2030 Chester Boulevard, Richmond, IN 47374.

Condolences may be sent to the family via the guest book at

Cemetery

Earlham Cemetery

1101 National Road West

Richmond, IN, 47374

Comments



“ Your mom lived a full and happy life and was obviously very appreciated by her family, blessed with love and happiness. We know you will keep fond memories of her.

Ursula & Timm - October 22, 2020 at 06:33 PM



“ Jane and siblings:
We are very sorry for your loss but share in your joy that she had her faith in Christ. It sounds like she was a wonderful woman that shared her life with many. We hope you all rejoice in the fond memories.
Tim & Kathy Roach

Tim & Kathy Roach - October 22, 2020 at 08:42 AM



“ Please except our condolences...May her memory be a blessing to you and the family.
Tony and Carol Chiaverini

Carol and Tony Chiaverini - October 21, 2020 at 05:36 PM



“ Connie and family-what a beautiful tribute to a remarkable woman. I remember your mother as being so gracious and ladylike, but with a fun sense of humor. Her appearance, like her home, was always neat as a pin. 95 years to enjoy the blessings of a beautiful family-I will keep all of you in my thoughts as you celebrate your mother's well-lived life.

Nicki Gosser - October 21, 2020 at 05:08 PM



“ Jeff, Connie, Jane & Kent. So sorry for your loss, but she is in a much better place & with your Dad. Have many good memories of your Mother & Dad when we were all in Gold Band Class at First Friends. The ice cream socials, Halloween parties & Christmas parties. None of us had any money, but lots of kids & lots of laughs. God Bless & just remember all the good times with her & your Dad.

Delaine Highley - October 21, 2020 at 09:47 AM



“ Thanks so much Delaine. It's so lovely to hear from someone who remembers her from the Marion First Friends days. I loved those ice cream socials—all those good sweets and we kids could run all around at church and the adults didn't seem to care! Connie

Connie Baxter - October 21, 2020 at 01:11 PM



“ Jeff & siblings. Many great memories of my childhood days at Southwest corner of 35 th n Home Ave in Marion. Great baseball games. Playing with cars n trucks . Your sweet mom used to bring us Kool And and snacks. Jerry Hoss and myself discussed those days recently and wondered where you was living at Jeff. Also discussed how you was an avid Dodger fan. Lol Sorry to read about the loss of your mother. It's tough but as time goes by the memories of her will help you make it thru the day. Ole friend Gary Mayo

Gary Mayo - October 21, 2020 at 07:32 AM



“ First time I met Berneil, she asked for a coke at breakfast. The lady got what she wanted. She was good to everyone at FFC. She and Sue Felton were so close. Whispering with each other. Whispering. Laughing. I'll never forget your beautiful smile. May you RIP. Condolences to the family.

Joyce Clarkston - October 20, 2020 at 11:00 PM



“ My prayers & thoughts to the family. She was such a lovely lady. I purchased she & Bill's lovely home on Saddlebrook Lane as they moved to Friends Fellowship. She loved it when I invited her back after I moved in so she could see how I decorated it.

Mary Jane Miller - October 20, 2020 at 03:20 PM



“ Thank you for the pleasure of making her a part of my life. I will miss seeing her weekly for her beauty shop visit.

Renee Ullinskey - October 20, 2020 at 01:27 PM



“ I was somewhat late to the Baxter Party but my time has been filled with wonderful. Berneil, Mrs. Baxter, Queen Mum Gilles our time together with love, music, respect, concern for children of the clan and so much more. I will truly miss her and our conversations in all forms. Melissa Baxter

melissa baxter - October 20, 2020 at 12:25 PM



“ Jeff, I am so sorry for your loss. As I read the tribute to your mother, I couldn't help but be amazed at what a truly inspiring woman she was. Her life was an encouragement to many. Linda Dotson-Nicholson (former HFA).

Linda Dotson-Nicholson - October 20, 2020 at 12:16 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time.

David Lydick and the Staff of Doan & Mills - October 20, 2020 at 11:41 AM