



## Mary Mildred Brannon Cox

October 21, 1921 - January 15, 2018

Mary Mildred Brannon Clayton Cox, 96, passed away peacefully at her home in Greenville on January 15th. Mildred (also known as Mil, Mickey, Mother, Ma) is deeply mourned by her family, son Pat Clayton and daughter-in-law Leslie of Charlotte, daughters DeLayne (Dee) Clayton and Janice (Jan) Cox of Greenville, and son Michael Clayton and daughter-in-law Pam Roberts of New York, N.Y.; grandchildren Jay Doolittle (Argentina) and Dean Doolittle; Valerie Exar (Elliott) and Joel Clayton; and Riquette Nielson (Wayne) and Ricky Friar (Charley); and great-grandchildren Neal and Laura Exar; Valeri Zhurakovskaya; Clay, Carden and Hollis Doolittle; Amanda Lewandowski, and Alex and Scott Nielson; Ricky L. Friar, and Alleyn and Izabella Friar. Mildred is predeceased by her parents, Erskine and Sallie Brannon; sisters Lucille McDaniel and Hazel Hadden; husband Vance Clayton (1945); and husband Edward Cox (1986).

Born in a small white clapboard house in Campobello, S.C., on Oct. 21, 1921, the third daughter of Erskine and Sallie, Mildred grew up a happy, lively and engaging girl in Greer, graduated from Greer High, and in 1940 married her childhood sweetheart, Vance Clayton, with whom she had three children (Pat, DeLayne, Michael) and lived what she called a modest but idyllic life on James Street, until Vance was called to Army service in July 1944. Vance was killed in action in Germany on April 1, 1945, a month before the end of the war

In spite of the unconscionable, inconsolable tragedy, Mildred survived, persevered and fiercely devoted herself to her family and children, and, eventually, in what she later called “a fairy tale come true,” she met Ed Cox, a young man returned from six years of service in the Navy, whose mother had become good friends with Mildred’s mother. Ed fell in love with “Mil” and her three children, and in 1948 they married, and had a child, Janice Maria, to join the other three, and Ed and Mil lived and laughed in a long, happy and devoted life together. Mildred and Ed doted on the grandchildren and cherished every moment they could see and be with them. She loved to entertain them each and every one, to be silly, to tease, to feed, to nurture. And she marveled at her luck to have great-grandchildren and she loved them all with great delight.

Mildred loved to laugh and make others laugh and join in her merriment. Over the years even as her family grew with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she also became Ma and surrogate mother to friends and relatives everywhere. A great cook and hostess, she spared nothing to welcome and honor guests. She took care of her invalid mother for many years, she endured a tragic loss of her young husband during World War II, lost her mother and then her father to cancer, lost her cherished husband of 38 years to cancer, and cared for each of her sisters until their deaths. All the while she lived a life of bringing joy and comfort to others. She struggled against tragedies and bounded up and kept going, bringing back the smile, the interminable will to live and give, to share, to love.

Her strength and her courage were boundless and inspiring; her dedication to her family, to her husband, to each one of her children was infinite and profound; her love, her compassion, her unqualified support and inspiration gave her children strength and courage throughout their lives. She once wrote that she “never wanted to be anything except a good wife and mother and housekeeper.” She was all that and more, and more. She was admired and

adored, known and revered for her warmth and generosity, her indomitable spirit and affecting humility and love. After all the children were gone from the home, and then when Ed died, she slowly returned to another way of giving and sharing, another stage, like the one she was thrust upon as a child of six, when her beloved father put her on the stage at her grade school auditorium in Fairview: "Daddy made a clown out of me," she once wrote. "He would play the guitar and I would do the Charleston and people would throw pennies up on the stage... I was scared but I loved it." She went on to entertain in outings with a senior club in Lyman; she performed in club skits in hilarious impersonations of celebrities; she reveled in the joy of bringing smiles to people and comfort to those in need. Her life was full of tragedy and joy, of trial and triumph, of strength and courage, of inspiration and love. And even in the recent years when age slowed her, she remained a charmer, always happy to amuse, to tell tales, jokes, to banter, and to be the humorous deflator of pretension. As recently as the past summer she would greet her children first thing in the morning with the cheery nursery song, "Good morning, Merry Sunshine, How did you wake so soon..." And she smiled, and made everyone smile, and made the day brighter. And made our lives brighter. Forever.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

JAN 20. 1:00 PM (ET)

Woodlawn Memorial Park  
1 Pine Knoll Drive  
Greenville, SC 29609

# Tribute Wall

DC

“ *As I look back now I realize how much joy Mother brought to me everyday. I will miss those early mornings as we drank coffee& watched the birds&told each other what we had dreamed the night before.*

dee clayton - January 21, 2018 at 11:34 PM

JC

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Janlce Cox - January 20, 2018 at 01:47 AM

JC

“ *Janlce Cox lit a candle in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox*



Janlce Cox - January 20, 2018 at 01:45 AM

JC

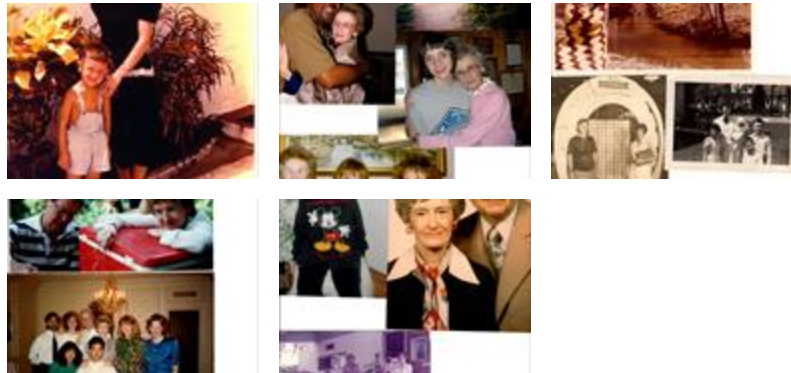
“ *Janlce Cox sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox*



Janlce Cox - January 20, 2018 at 01:44 AM

MI

“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



Michael - January 19, 2018 at 10:07 PM

CR

“ *Dee, Pat, and Family:*

*Our heartfelt sympathy in the death of your precious Mother. Thank you for sharing her story in her obituary as she led a life of service and love for her family - an example we all need to hear about. Our prayer is for God to surround you all with His love, mercy and grace as you face this sad time and may He give you the strength that only He can give. May God bless each of you. With our love and prayers, Linda & Clyde*



Clyde & Linda Coggins Roberts - January 19, 2018 at 02:22 PM

DC

*Thank you, Clyde& Linda for your kind words. I really appreciate it.  
Love, Dee*

dee clayton - January 24, 2018 at 10:36 PM

MI

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Michael - January 19, 2018 at 09:15 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Jay Doolittle - January 19, 2018 at 08:16 AM

DC

A sweet picture of Mother with Argentina & Valeriya

dee clayton - January 21, 2018 at 11:43 PM



“ 36 files added to the album Memories Album



The Wood Mortuary - January 19, 2018 at 07:26 AM

AL

“ Amanda Lewandowski lit a candle in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox



Amanda Lewandowski - January 18, 2018 at 09:04 PM

AL

“ Amanda Lewandowski sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox



Amanda Lewandowski - January 18, 2018 at 08:49 PM

AL

“ Amanda Lewandowski lit a candle in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox



Amanda Lewandowski - January 18, 2018 at 08:36 PM

JA

“ Janet lit a candle in memory of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox



Janet - January 18, 2018 at 08:19 PM

FS

“ Fred and Janet Sims purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Mildred Brannon Cox.



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**Fred and Janet Sims** - January 18, 2018 at 08:01 PM