

# Kathryn Mikel Jenkins Bedingfield

August 23, 1928 -

January 26, 2014

## Columbus, Georgia-

Kathryn Mikel Jenkins Bedingfield passed away on Sunday morning following a sudden illness.

Mrs. Bedingfield was known as "Mike" to her family and friends. She served as a school teacher, psychometrist, and psychologist for Muscogee County School District, but first and foremost she was a wife and mother, and an all-around vibrant person.

Mike's parents, H. Winton and Mattie Kate Jenkins, served as Methodist missionaries to Manchuria before her birth, returning to raise their family in Mississippi and Georgia. As a young teenager, she spent six weeks in New York City as secretary to her deaconess aunt, and she kept a detailed scrapbook of the entire adventure. Both the adventure and the scrapbook exemplify her love for life, for adventure, and for making memories.

She attended Young Harris College in North Georgia, the University of Georgia, Columbus College, and Georgia State University, earning advanced degrees in education, psychometry, and psychology.

On the campus of the University of Georgia, she met - and fell deeply in love with - a Marine Corps veteran of World War II named Jim Bedingfield. After a six-month courtship, the two were married in 1949, and they moved to Columbus in 1952, where they built the house that would be their life-long home.

In addition to her educational skills, Mike was an avid do-it-yourselfer, building cabinets, laying brick, sawing, and otherwise helping Jim feather their nest. She cooked, canned, gardened, sewed, and kept house. When they grew out of room, she helped Jim build an addition on to their house. And later, when they needed even more space, they bought the house next door, giving her more places to cook, build, decorate, garden, maintain, and host guests.

After her retirement, Mike didn't slow down, but stayed busy ferrying grandchildren between their activities, attending athletic events, creating detailed memory books, and visiting with her many friends.

In recent years, when Jim began to have short-term memory problems, Mike became his primary caregiver, insisting that he stay home and enjoy the view of his beloved birds, and his backyard. During this time, she enriched his life with

notes, written stories, and scrapbooks that he loved to look at for hours on end.

Above all, though, Mike's greatest joy was her family, and she loved big events that brought her entire clan to her home, especially Christmas, and the annual cane-grinding, syrup-making weekend that Jim started as an offshoot of his gardening hobby.

She embraced any new technology that allowed her to keep up with her family and friends, not only e-mail, but also texting and the latest in social media, using the appropriate handle, "kmjbusyb." She often encouraged her children with messages like, "Carpe Diem," and "So much love."

She was active and energetic, exercising at home, walking around the neighborhood, still driving, not even close to "acting her age," until the stroke that resulted in her passing.

Mike Bedingfield was an exemplary person. As one of her daughters said, "Anyone who had the good fortune to know my Mom knew that they were loved unconditionally." And a grandson said of her, "I swear I have more down to earth, perspective altering, conversations with my grandma than anyone else. Lady gets it! #mamab"

Mike was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. James W. Bedingfield, sisters Theo Horton and Mary Higgins, and brothers Hubert and John Jenkins.

All of her family already misses her dearly, including her son, Carl Bedingfield (and his wife Jayne), three daughters, Carol (and Matt) Stevens, Cheryl (and Charles) Tate, and Charisse (and Bob) Hill, grandchildren Rebecca, James Jr., Elisabeth, Benjamin, Cathy, Rob, Shannon, Brad, Carson, McKenzie, Mikel Anna, and McLendon, and eight great-grandchildren, Wyatt, Jace, Anders, Halle, Parker, Tate, Sarah, and Lily.

The funeral service will be held on Tuesday, January 28, at First Baptist Church, 212 Twelfth St., Columbus GA, 31901. Visitors will be received at 1:00, and the funeral will start at 2:00. Interment will follow the service at Parkhill Cemetery, 4061 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31907.

To honor Mike's life, the family suggests memorial donations to two of Mike's many favorite ministries:

- Television Ministry, First Baptist Church, 212 Twelfth St., Columbus GA, 31901, and

- "Go Fish" Outdoor Ministries, 4803 Sedgefield Ave., Columbus, GA 31904.

*Striffler Hamby*

