



## Eileen Margaret Van Dyke

February 19, 1937 - June 1, 2025

Eileen Margaret Desmond Van Dyke, 88, passed away peacefully on June 1, 2025 with her cherished family by her side during her final hours. She will be greatly missed by all who love and admire her.

Eileen was a loving and devoted mother to her four children. Her children, family, and many friends across the country adored her for her boundless energy and impactful service. Eileen had forged an illustrious, trailblazing career in medicine, health administration, and higher education that spanned nearly 50 years. Through her compassionate care and esteemed accomplishments, Eileen has bestowed an enduring legacy that profoundly inspires her friends and family as well as countless patients, students, and colleagues.

Eileen was born and raised in the Washington, D.C. area, growing up in Bethesda, MD and graduated from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. She went on to earn her diploma as a Registered Nurse at the Washington Hospital Center School of Nursing in 1958. She then worked in OB-GYN at D.C. General Hospital. After relocating to Sedalia, MO, Eileen and her former husband brought her beloved children into the world – Jerry, Debra, John, and Rick.

After returning to the D.C. area as a single mother, Eileen earned a Bachelor

of Science degree in the Physician Assistant (PA) program at Johns Hopkins University in 1976. At the time, PA was a revolutionary profession that had been newly created to meet the demands of underserved communities, and Eileen was among the first PAs to provide medical care.

Eileen then moved to Cortland, NY to raise her children and pioneer rural health in Central New York. She was the first full-time family practice provider at an innovative rural health center where health services were previously nonexistent. Eileen expanded her expertise by becoming a surgical assistant after completing the Physician Assistant Surgical Residency Program at Norwalk Hospital/Yale University School of Medicine. She also earned her master's degree in health administration at the New School for Social Research in Syracuse, NY. From there, Eileen worked at the Northwest Regional Primary Care Association in Seattle and managed the Recruitment and Retention Program for health centers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. Eileen later moved to Colorado, a place she always wanted to live, and served as a Physician Assistant in a family practice.

After decades of providing patient care, Eileen decided to give back to her profession and took a position at the University of Kentucky as a professor in the College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Studies program. Throughout her seven years at the University of Kentucky until her retirement in 2007, Eileen firmly established herself as a prolific and recognized authority in areas including women's health, rural health, and alternative medicine. She published several peer-reviewed journal articles and amassed research grants totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. She additionally served on many different boards of directors and advisory committees while at the University of Kentucky and in previous years.

Eileen also was a dedicated and effective teacher who was revered by her students. She was awarded the Kingston Award for Excellence in Teaching,

the highest award for excellence in teaching bestowed by the University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences. As the ultimate honor for Eileen's contributions to the field of rural health, the University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences established the Eileen Van Dyke Rural Service Award. This award recognizes a University of Kentucky Morehead PA student who "exemplifies excellence in academics and service to the community and has proven themselves to be wholeheartedly interested in the welfare of rural Kentuckians."

As a devoted mother, Eileen was unwavering in her support of her children's endeavors and pride in their accomplishments. Eileen was always introducing her children to as many activities and adventures as possible, including skiing, camping, canoeing, snowmobiling, hiking, raising beloved pets, the arts, and – as a true Marylander – picking crabs, to name a few favorites. She also encouraged and inspired her children to explore the country and the world as she had done. Among Eileen's most remarkable trips were to Cuba and Russia to study healthcare services in other countries.

Throughout her life, Eileen explored a vast array of interests including cooking, basket weaving, spinning yarn, pottery, gardening, sheep and llamas, and collecting antiques. After her retirement, Eileen lived in the Rehoboth Beach, DE area, and eventually Easton, MD, where she enjoyed living near the water, pursuing creative hobbies, and spending time with her dogs, friends, family, children, and grandchildren.

Eileen is preceded in death by her parents, Gerald Desmond and Margaret Holland Desmond, and her son Gerald "Jerry" Van Dyke (Andrea). She is survived by her children Debra Van Dyke, John Van Dyke, and Rick Van Dyke (Diane); her grandchildren, Joseph Van Dyke, Sara Van Dyke, Renee Van Dyke, and Brian Van Dyke; her sisters Jerol Briggs (Tom) and Marilyn

Desmond; a niece, Jeanne Briggs (Tom Boone), and a nephew, Tom Briggs.

To celebrate and honor Eileen's beautiful life, a funeral service will be held July 11, 2025 at the Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, 200 S. Harrison Street, Easton, MD. All friends and family are welcome to attend. Visitation is from 1pm to 2pm, and the service is from 2pm to 3pm. The Memorial Columbarium ceremony will follow the service at Woodlawn Memorial Park, 11365 Ocean Gateway, Easton, MD 21601.

In lieu of flowers, and to honor Eileen's lasting support of the PA profession and rural health, a donation can be made to the University of Kentucky Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Rural Health Award. The faculty of the University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Studies Department annually selects a full-time PA student on the Morehead campus for this award, recognizing students who have demonstrated a commitment to rural health. Use the link to contribute to the PAS Rural Health Award Fund. In the "Gift instructions" field, enter "In honor of Eileen Van Dyke." <https://give.uky.edu/campaigns/47165/donations/new?aft=c9d49fc7637deb55965867c47270e874>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

JUL 11. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home  
200 S. Harrison Street  
EASTON  
EASTON, MD 21601

## Memorial Service

JUL 11. 2:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A. - Easton  
200 S. Harrison St.  
Easton, MD 21601

## Graveside

JUL 11. 3:00 PM (ET)

Woodlawn Memorial Park  
11365 Ocean Gateway  
Easton, MD 21601

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - June 16, 2025 at 04:17 PM

KK

“ *There are so many cherished moments of laughter and adventures how do you choose just one. It started when she “forced “ me to go with her to select a puppy. Never had a dog what would I know. That’s when our lives changed. We both fell in love with two little Shih Tzu Amy and Shungz. Every thing evolvd around our dogs and Black Russians. So our many adventures just got started. I miss her terribly and will always cherish and love her.*



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**Kaa Kilpatrick** - July 11, 2025 at 01:00 PM

SM

“ *SMBrown planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.*

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**SMBrown** - July 10, 2025 at 05:08 PM

SM

“ *SMBrown purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.*



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**SMBrown** - July 10, 2025 at 05:08 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.

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July 10, 2025 at 09:24 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.*



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July 10, 2025 at 09:24 AM

DS

“ *Dan and Kay Scharch purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.*



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**Dan and Kay Scharch** - July 08, 2025 at 03:35 PM

DS

“ Dan and Kay Scharch planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.

Dan and Kay Scharch - July 08, 2025 at 03:35 PM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.



July 07, 2025 at 03:04 PM

LM

“ Love, Marilyn planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.

Love, Marilyn - June 29, 2025 at 11:14 AM

LM

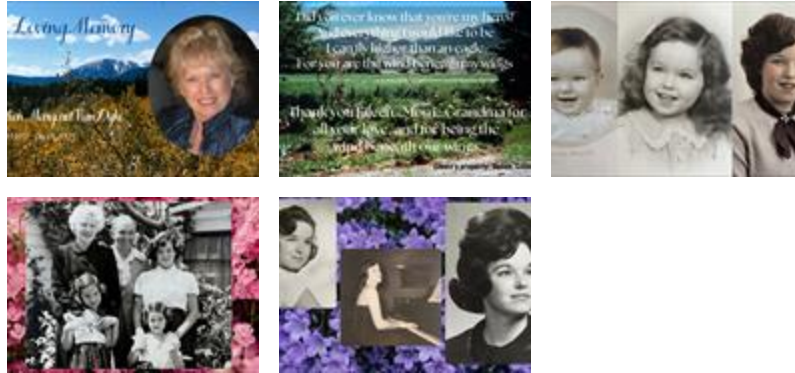
“ Love, Marilyn purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke.



Love, Marilyn - June 29, 2025 at 11:14 AM

VF

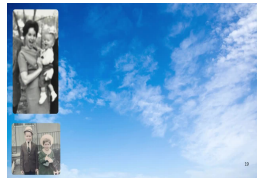
“ 36 files added to the album *Eileen's Memorial Slideshow Pictures*



Van Dyke Family - June 22, 2025 at 02:15 PM

VF

“ 1 file added to the album *Eileen's Memorial Slideshow Video*



Van Dyke Family - June 22, 2025 at 02:10 PM

KD

*Thank you for creating this marvelous video. It certainly honors and shared the exciting, accomplished life of my dear friend Eileen.*

Kathleen Dickinson - June 24, 2025 at 10:01 AM

DE

*Love to you Kathleen.*

Debra - July 10, 2025 at 04:47 PM

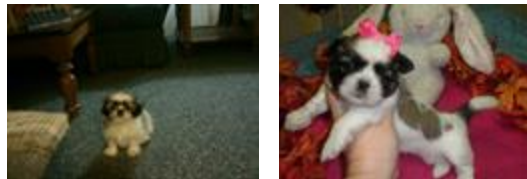
LG

*What a wonderful video, letting us share in the life of our dear friend. Many treasured memories of our time together in Salida, Co and time together in Kentucky and Tennessee. Bill and Linda Gunter*

Linda Gunter - July 11, 2025 at 07:08 PM

DD

“ *Suri puppy*



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**Debra J Van Dyke** - June 21, 2025 at 04:41 PM

DD

*Suri Puppy*

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**Debra J Van Dyke** - June 21, 2025 at 04:50 PM

DD

“ <https://youtu.be/HaZpZQG2z10?si=TMAeV6L6Xj5MWcWT>

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**Debra Van Dyke** - June 21, 2025 at 02:51 PM

DD

*Queen - You're My Best Friend (Official Video)*

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**Debra J Van Dyke** - June 21, 2025 at 04:36 PM

DD

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Debra Van Dyke** - June 20, 2025 at 12:06 PM

DD

*If I should stay  
I would only be in your way  
So I'll go, but I know  
I'll think of you every step of the way  
And I will always love you  
I will always love you  
You  
My darling, you, mm-mm  
Bittersweet memories  
That is all I'm taking with me  
So goodbye, please don't cry  
We both know I'm not what you, you need  
And I will always love you  
I will always love you  
I hope life treats you kind  
And I hope you have all you've dreamed of  
And I wish you joy and happiness  
But above all this, I wish you love  
And I will always love you  
I will always love you  
I will always love you  
I will always love you  
I, I will always love you  
You  
Darling, I love you  
Ooh, I'll always, I'll always love you  
Source: Musixmatch  
Songwriters: Dolly Parton  
I Will Always Love You lyrics © Velvet Apple Music, Crc Jianian  
Publishing*

Debra Van Dyke - June 20, 2025 at 12:11 PM

DD

<https://youtu.be/3JWtaaS7LdU>

Debra J Van Dyke - June 21, 2025 at 04:42 PM

DD

*Whitney Houston - I Will Always Love You (Official 4K Video)*

Debra J Van Dyke - June 21, 2025 at 04:42 PM

RH

“ Robert Hazeltine lit a candle in memory of Eileen Margaret Van Dyke



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**Robert Hazeltine** - June 16, 2025 at 05:36 PM

DD

*Thank you Robert.*

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**Debra Van Dyke** - June 16, 2025 at 07:33 PM