



## Betty "Bets" Ramsey

June 9, 1923 - May 3, 2026

Betty June (Bets) Miller Ramsey, daughter of Oscar Lee and June Winter Miller, was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on June 9, 1923. She attended elementary and high schools in Oak Park, Illinois, and obtained degrees of Bachelor of Arts (Art), cum laude, from the University of Chattanooga (later the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) and Master of Science (Crafts) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Bets was known nationally and abroad as a fiber artist, author, curator, and quilt historian, and as an exhibiting artist who not only taught, wrote, and lectured on textile arts and quilts for a wide audience, but also enjoyed teaching children's art classes. She initiated the annual Southern Quilt Symposium (1974-1991) at the Hunter Museum of American Art in Chattanooga and contributed approximately 850 weekly columns on quilt-making to the Chattanooga Times during the same period. She was a member of the American Crafts Council, the Southern Highland Craft Guild and a founding member of both the Tennessee Association of Craft Artists and the American Quilt Study Group. She was the 2005 Honoree of the Quilter's Hall of Fame, Marion, Indiana. In 2009, she received the Tennessee Governor's Award in the Arts. Her work is owned by many private collectors, as well as by such institutions as the Tennessee State Museum and the International Quilt Museum in Nebraska.

Annually over the past 12 years, Bets created 15-20 original works of textile art wall hangings for sale at an art exhibit she arranged, with all proceeds donated to the Episcopal School of Nashville. In honor of her 102nd birthday last year, the Episcopal School of Nashville created the Bets Ramsey Art and Creativity Award to celebrate her remarkable life of creativity, generosity, and the impact that she continued to share with the world.

She was married first to Michael Kopcha; her second husband of 43 years was the writer, professor and poet Paul Ramsey. Paul and Bets lived in Chattanooga for many years, where they were active parishioners of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. After Paul's death, Bets moved to Nashville in 1998, where she became a member of St. George's Episcopal Church. At St. George's, she was a mentor for Companions in Christ classes, served on the vestry, was an active participant in a Centering Prayer group and led a writing class. She was also a lay minister for healing prayer for 40 years.

Bets was well-known for her hospitality and generosity to family, friends, and charitable causes. She is survived by four children: Starr Elizabeth Ramsey (Bill) Helms of Athens, Georgia; James Graves (Jan) Ramsey of Nashville; Lee Winter Ramsey of Nashville; and Sarah "Sally" Walden Ramsey (Jeff) Stillings of Richardson, Texas. Surviving her also are six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many beloved cousins, nieces, nephews, and extended family. Her brother, Ward Winter Miller (Nina) of Lagrangeville, New York, preceded her in death.

A memorial service will be held at St. George's Episcopal Church in Nashville on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 11:30 am, preceded by a Visitation with the family at 10:00 am. A private burial service will be held at Larkspur Conservation at Taylor Hollow.

Memorial gifts may be made to: The Episcopal School of Nashville, 1310 Ordway Place, Nashville, TN 37206 OR The American Quilt Study Group, 1610 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

# Cemetery Details

## Larkspur Conservation

155 Bear Carr Road  
Westmoreland, TN 37186  
<https://larkspurconservation.org>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAY **15**. 11:30 AM (CT)

St. George's Episcopal Church  
4715 Harding Pike  
Nashville, TN 37205

# Tribute Wall



“ *Anything for You was purchased for the family of Betty "Bets" Ramsey.*



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May 12 at 02:28 PM



“ *I was one of the people blessed by Bets' faithfulness and witness as a leader of Companions in Christ years ago. She was so loving and kind to me and my daughters, who grew up knowing Bets. We are fortunate to have some of her small works of art in our home; we will treasure them and memories of her.*

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**Cynthia Paschal** - May 06 at 06:13 PM



“ *I will always treasure my memory of meeting Bets at my first AQSG seminar 30+ years ago. She laughed at the armload of books that I had purchased, but of course she was delighted by my enthusiasm and was very welcoming. She was one of my favorite people in AQSG from the beginning---always encouraging and sharing and kind. She will be very much missed. - Lynne Bassett from Massachusetts*

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**Lynne Z. Bassett** - May 06 at 03:52 PM



“ *Bets was one a true treasure. She was a genuine and lovely lady who truly cared for her fellow human beings. I will miss her kind spirit and warm smile. Wendy Reed from Maine*

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**wendy Reed** - May 06 at 12:31 PM