



Elizabeth (Bette) G. Mason

January 12, 1933 - January 13, 2026

Elizabeth (Bette) G. Mason

Elizabeth (Bette) G. Mason of Blacksburg died Tuesday, January 13, 2026, one day after her 93rd birthday, after a brief illness. Left to cherish her memory are her son, Thomas K. Mason; his children, Evan Mason and Collin Mason; her daughter, Elizabeth Gayle Stratton, and her husband, Brentley C. Stratton; their children, Elizabeth Kent Stratton and Oliver Clarke Stratton; and Oliver's partner, Devin Boehmer. Her husband, John G. Mason, died in 2006.

Bette was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the only child of Frank K. and Elizabeth P. Gayle, and maintained strong ties to the city and the eastern shore of Maryland, particularly Ocean City for her entire life. In 1956, she married John right after he was discharged from the army and they started their married life in Chicago. After a brief stint there, they arrived in Blacksburg in 1959, baby in tow, where John had been hired as a professor in the Department of Chemistry at Virginia Tech (then VPI). Bette immediately immersed herself in the life of a young faculty wife and new mother, joining a variety of organizations and meeting numerous other women who arrived in town at the same time, many of whom became her lifelong friends, bonding through motherhood and playing in local bridge clubs, multiple times a week.

A longtime crafter and knitter, Bette worked in various local stores such as

The Gay Whirl and was also one of the original organizers and participants in the Y Craft Fair. In 1975, she ventured out on her own, founding a business called "The Merry Magpie" in the Barrel Mall in downtown Blacksburg, selling crafts and antiques. A long time casual antique buyer and seller, she, John, and her father, Frank were part of the group that started the Cambria Emporium. The business eventually expanded to multiple area antique malls such as Stagecoach in Radford and Charlotte's Web in Salem. In her later years, she volunteered at Second Time Around, the Humane Society thrift shop.

Known for her big, boisterous, friendly personality, she was always willing to lend a hand, organize neighborhood cookouts, and look after neighbors and friends. She loved collectibles, game shows, cooking, music, exceeding the speed limit, all animals, ice cream, and Christmas. She was the chief organizer for the many family trips to Baltimore, Hungry Mother State Park and the annual vacations in Ocean City, MD.

Most recently, Bette's favorite activities were visiting local thrift shops and bookstores, feeding and watching the birds in her backyard, hanging out with her beloved 18 year old cat Bailey, running around town with her favorite companions Maureen and Lois, getting her hair done by Terry, daily visits from neighbors and their dogs (especially Ellie), and visits with her children and grandchildren.

Fiercely independent, Bette had many loyal friends and neighbors (past and present) who were willing to provide friendship and assistance, as needed, through the years. These include Connie and Carla, Lisa and Guy, Mike and Julie, Mike S., Kacie, Traci, Carol, Ron, Lois, Maureen, Robin, Terry, Karen, Kathy A., Mark and Kray, Candace and Lee, Jessie and Brian, Pat B., and the many people she met through Warm Hearth at Home.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Warm Hearth at Home or Good Samaritan Strauss Hospice House, or a donation of household items to Treasure Trove, which supports Warm Hearth.

A visitation will be held on Monday, February 23, 2026, from 4 - 6 pm, at McCoy Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **23**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home
150 Country Club Dr. S.W.
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 552-3211
mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net
<https://mccoyfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

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“ *Bette was our “second mother” and next door neighbor on Draper Rd. The Bette Mason breakfast was deliciously famous, with her Mac and Cheese an unsurpassed tie. I have fond memories of her teaching us crafts, which we gave as Christmas presents and sold at the YMCA crafts fair. She will always be alive in my heart and memories.*

Eia Ballas - February 23 at 02:30 PM