



Mrs Mary Elizabeth Michaelson

January 16, 1947 - June 19, 2026

Mary Elizabeth “Beth” Michaelson (née Caldwell), 79, of Gulf Breeze, Florida, passed away peacefully on Friday, June 19, 2026. Family and loved ones surrounded her with love during the week before she passed.

Born on January 16, 1947, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, she was the daughter of John Spencer Caldwell and Mary Sue Caldwell (née Nolen). Beth spent her childhood in Tuscaloosa staring at Bryant-Denny Stadium which loomed large, basically in the backyard. She very proudly attended the University of Alabama and Roll-Tided her way onto the membership roster of the Phi Mu sorority.

To call Beth a die-hard Alabama football fan is really an understatement. Anyone who watched a game with her but dared cheer for the opposing team rapidly learned that anyone who spoke against the Tide was very much barking up the wrong tree. In fact, some of her last words were "Roll Tide."

Beth was an outstanding cook who took great pride in preparing mouthwatering meals that brought family together and created lifelong memories. All who were fortunate enough to enjoy her cooking agreed: her meals were restaurant-quality, and she could easily have been a professional chef.

She was an avid gardener and a pioneer of square-foot gardening long before it became popular. She loved animals, particularly the many hamsters and gerbils that were part of family life over the years, and she cherished the family's dogs; Riley B. Bojangles, Belle, Bama, and Rusty.

Beth instilled in her children a love of reading and literature that endures to this day. Each still credits their mother for the love and care with which she read bedtime stories, creating some of their most treasured childhood memories.

Beth was a voracious collector of sheep figurines and amassed an impressive collection. They gave her great peace thinking of them in the context of being led beside cool waters and through green pastures as in the 23rd Psalm, a passage of the Bible that comforted her in the final days. She also had a passion for collecting, categorizing and maintaining a large collection of seashells: in fact, she loved the beach and was so thrilled when she and Jeff retired to the Alabama gulf coast. The family is comforted thinking about her combing the sugar sand beaches of heaven, searching for the absolute perfect sand dollar.

She had a deep reverence for family heirlooms, particularly china and silver. She often brought them out to make any family meal extra fancy and special. For that matter, no party was complete without Beth. She brought joy wherever she went and was often the belle of the ball. People still talk about how much fun it was to spend time with the mother of the bride at her oldest daughter's wedding in 2019.

As a young girl, Beth received Jesus as her Lord and Savior at a church camp. That decision turned into a lifelong love of the Lord and connection to service in her local church. She valiantly served from Alabama to Illinois to Minnesota and back, sharing her faith with Jeff, her children, grandchildren.

Jeff and Beth were Sunday School teachers and active members of Bible studies all throughout their marriage. Beth's lasting legacy of faith, church, community service, love of the Lord, prayer and the Bible is evident in her family today.

Beth is survived by her husband and lifelong partner, Jeffrey, a fellow University of Alabama student she met on campus when he was a member of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. Struck by Cupid's arrow on the stairs of the Phi Mu house, young Beth famously remarked that Jeff had "cute knees" and the two were inseparable from that moment on.

After meeting on campus, they quickly married and built a beautiful life together, immensely proud of their three children: Kimberly Michaelson-Epstein (Jeff), Catherine Higginson (née Michaelson, Bill), and David Michaelson (Megan). Jeff and Beth were also blessed with four grandchildren: Zachary Kuiken, Savannah Chapuis (née Higginson, Hunter), Nathan Higginson, and Camilla Michaelson. Over the years, there were also countless granddogs, three grandcats, and even one grand snow leopard "gecko".

She is also survived by her siblings, Lieutenant General John Spencer Caldwell, U.S. Army (Retired) (Judy), and Analeslie Muncy (née Unfried, Michael). Beth was preceded in death by her parents, John Spencer Caldwell Sr. and Mary Sue Caldwell (Nolen), and by her brother, William Herbert "Bill" Caldwell.

Anyone who knew Beth will never forget her infectious smile or her generous, warm, and loving heart. Her absence leaves a space that can never truly be filled, and she will be deeply missed by all who loved her.

On July 10, 2026, friends and family are welcome to join us at First Baptist

Gulf Shores; 2200 W. First St.; Gulf Shores, AL 36542. This is also the location for any flowers to be sent.

The family will receive friends from 10:30 to 11:30 am, followed by a Celebration of Life service at 11:30 am. A luncheon will be served immediately following the service. A graveside service will take place at 3:30 pm at Pine Rest Memorial Park; 16541 US- 98; Foley, AL 36535.

For out-of-town friends and family coming in for the service here is a suggested hotel close to Cathy's house and the church.

Courtyard by Marriott
3750 Gulf Shores Pkwy
Gulf Shores, AL 36542
(251) 968-1113

Cemetery Details

Pine Rest Memorial Park

16541 US Hwy 98
Foley, AL 36535
(251) 943-5667
info@pinerestfuneralhome.com

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUL 10. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

First Baptist Gulf Shores
2200 W 1st St
Gulf Shores, AL 36542-4448
(251) 968-7369

Celebration of Life

JUL 10. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

First Baptist Gulf Shores
2200 W 1st St
Gulf Shores, AL 36542-4448
(251) 968-7369

Graveside

JUL 10. 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Pine Rest Memorial Park
16541 US Hwy 98
Foley, AL 36535
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