



## Betsy Davis Gildehaus

October 30, 2024

Betsy Davis Gildehaus died on Oct. 30, 2024, at The Evergreens in Moorestown, NJ at the age of 89. She enjoyed a blessed life. Betsy valued and cared for many friends and family and will be missed by them all. She was a person of great love, leadership, and joy.

Resident of Moorestown since 1973, she was born Betty Jane Davis in Philadelphia, PA in 1935 and, after early childhood in Ardmore, lived with her parents in Haverford, PA. Her parents were only children, and she was an only child, so her parents deputized friends, work colleagues, and distant relatives to serve as aunts and uncles—and she enjoyed the love and care of many. She graduated from Haverford Friends School and Baldwin School, from which she maintained life-long friendships. Her Baldwin yearbook noted that she served as editor of the high school’s newspaper and that she was “always writing notes to herself . . . [had an] indescribable[e] and uncontrollable laugh . . . never seems to take any gym . . . rushes frantically about school . . . hair [is] always perfect . . . can eat and eat and never get fat.” Her family reports that all of these observations sound familiar. She stayed true to herself for a lifetime.

Known as “BJ” to her high school and college friends, she graduated from Middlebury College, which she loved. In her words, “my four years at Middlebury were great—filled with interactions with interesting and bright students. Among the many highlights: Chaplain Scott’s leadership; Robert Frost’s visits to campus; long, cold walks to and from Tri-Delt; the excitement of Winter Carnival; and watching the skiers at the Snow Bowl.” She loved to tell a story about lodging for her 60th Reunion. She called the Alumni Office to ask that she and her husband be placed on a dormitory’s first floor. In no uncertain terms, she was told that the first floor was “reserved for old people.” She laughed and laughed about how being in their 80’s was not old enough for hearty Midds.

After Middlebury, she returned home to Haverford and secured an advertising job with N.W. Ayer in downtown Philadelphia, where she facilitated production of advertisements for her assigned accounts. She also worked briefly for Johnson and Johnson. During this time, she met the love of her life, Ralph Gildehaus, Jr., from Saint Louis, at a young adults’

group at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church—her family’s long-time place of worship. They were married in 1960 and she changed her name from Betty Jane to Betsy (which is the name her mother called her). Her high school and college friends still call her BJ—and always will.

Betsy and Ralph moved to Tulsa, OK, and started a family with two boys—Ralph III and Charles. Her husband’s work took the family to Deerfield, IL; Ladue, MO; and Moorestown, NJ, where Betsy and Ralph lived since 1973. In all places, they were involved with churches and in volunteer activities. In Deerfield, Betsy served as a church Deaconess and as a member of the North Shore board of the Northwestern Settlement House. She served two terms as an Elder on the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown Session—its governing body. She also served as moderator of Presbyterian Women and engaged in volunteer work such as with the Cooper Hospital Auxiliary. Betsy and Ralph enjoyed memberships in the Moorestown Field Club and the Pennsylvania Society of New Jersey.

Betsy and Ralph liked Moorestown so much that they decided to retire there—living in the same house for over 50 years. They spent a few weeks most years in Siesta Key, FL—often hosting their children, daughter-in-law Jan, and grandchildren George and Diane. They enjoyed many trips and cruises, both in the United States and internationally. They took a Mississippi riverboat cruise to celebrate Ralph’s 90th birthday and traveled to their grandson’s graduation from the University of North Carolina and granddaughter’s graduation from high school—which turned out to be their last trips together. Betsy and Ralph were happily married for 60 years until he passed away in 2020.

In her last years, Betsy showed fortitude and grace. After the death of her husband almost exactly four years ago, she started to reorganize her life and even learned how to use a computer—a feat for which she was proud. When a series of strokes and infections began a month later, she worked so hard to restore as much of her functionality as possible and accepted what could not be restored. She lived out the Serenity Prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change and the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Betsy loved her family, neighbors, friends, church, alma maters, and Moorestown community, for which her entire family is grateful for love and support over many years. Her family is especially grateful to The Evergreens for her care and to her many friends who visited and called her frequently. She is preceded in death by her husband, Ralph F. Gildehaus, Jr. She is survived by her children Ralph F. Gildehaus III, and his wife Jan, and Charles Davis Gildehaus; and her grandchildren George Gildehaus and Diane Gildehaus.

Memorial service will be held on Monday, November 11, 2024 at 11 am at the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, 101 Bridgeboro Road, Moorestown NJ 08057.

Reception will follow in Fellowship Hall.

If you are unable to attend the memorial service in person, you are invited to participate virtually at 11 am on Monday, November 11 the link <https://www.fpcmoorestown.org/worship/live-stream/>

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown,

September 12th Fund, P.O. Box 868, Moorestown NJ 08057.

# Cemetery Details

## Presbyterian Cemetery

101 Bridgeboro Rd  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

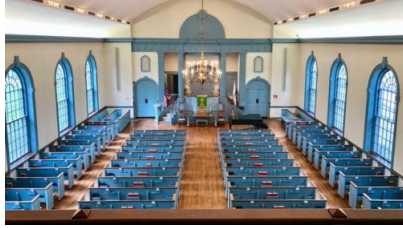
NOV 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church  
101 Bridgeboro Road  
Moorestown, NJ 08057  
(856) 235-1688  
<http://www.fpcmoorestown.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Lewis Funeral Home created a Betty Davis Gildehaus Live Stream in memory of Betsy Davis Gildehaus*



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**Lewis Funeral Home** - November 01, 2024 at 05:10 PM

MC

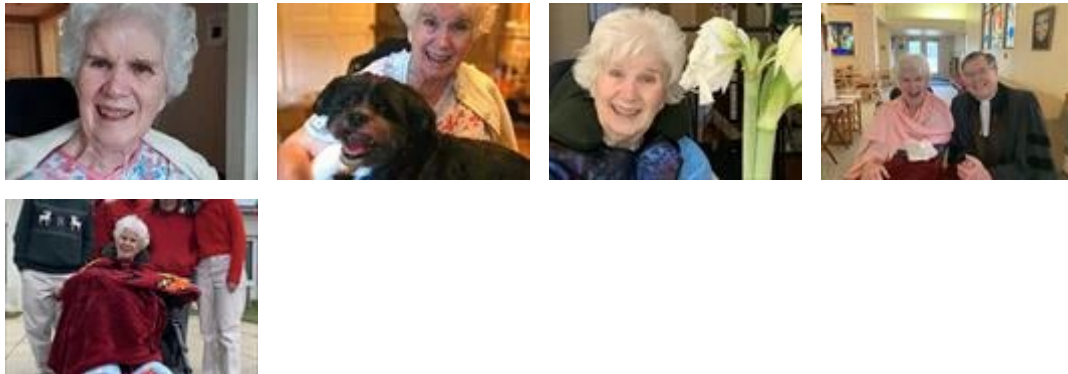
“ *nd she shall continue to be in all my memories. Ralph, I look forward to when we can meet up in Durham for lunch. With love, Mary Louise Cribbin*

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**Mary Louise Cribbin** - November 11, 2024 at 12:38 PM

RA

“ *34 files added to the tribute wall*



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**Ralph** - November 03, 2024 at 03:49 PM