



Gayle Bennett Aiesi

January 27, 1947 - May 6, 2020

Gayle Bennett Aiesi, child of God, counselor, teacher, wife, mother, grandmother and friend, died Wednesday at her home in Edisto Beach, SC, of complications from cancer. She was 73.

Gayle lived for the past 26 years in Greenville, a devoted spouse to her husband, Donald Aiesi, until recently a longtime professor at Furman University. To so many beloved Furman students who traveled with them on foreign study or just came to the house for a home-cooked meal, he was always “Dr. Aiesi” (out of respect), and she was always “Gayle”. For she had a tremendous empathy for others and their lives, counseling and teaching formally and informally her entire adventurous life.

Born on Jan. 27, 1947, in Columbus, GA (and forever a Georgia peach), Gayle grew up near military bases throughout the United States as her father served in the U.S. Navy. As a child, Gayle lived with her family in Norfolk, VA; Newport, RI; Bremerhaven and Karlsruhe, Germany (where her younger brother was born) and several other towns; and she graduated from high school in Macon, GA. After earning her degree from Mercer University in three years, Gayle married at 20 and became an elementary school teacher in High Springs, FL, until the first of her three sons was born a few years later. She devoted the next 20 years to raising Chris, Roger and Justin, primarily in Orange Park, FL, where she also taught Sunday School, served as a Cub

Scout den mother, and fully supported all of her children's numerous activities. During this time, Gayle also taught middle school English and earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of North Florida. She subsequently worked with families of domestic violence as a civilian counselor at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville.

In 1993, Gayle married the love of her life, Don, and moved to be with him in Greenville. Gayle and Don were a matched pair, beloved mentors to many students, and she loved being a Furman professor's wife. Together, they were often seen walking around the Furman lake together and took numerous trips to the United Kingdom (and other global destinations), often leading groups of students on foreign study. Gayle's foremost charges were always her sons, of whom she was enormously proud. She always put family first, and traveled constantly to support her children and grandchildren, attending ball games, concerts, graduations and holiday celebrations. She took them on adventures of every kind, from London tours to whitewater rafting to turtle walks to ferris wheels, and gave much advice and encouragement to them through visits, letters, phone calls and texts. She loved well and was greatly loved.

Gayle, in her last days, frequently said, "all my hope is in Jesus, in life and in death, now and forevermore." She had walked with Christ all of her life and walks with him still. Her favorite verse was 1 Peter 5:10: "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."

Gayle is survived by her husband, Don; her brother Dr. Tom Bennett and his wife, Cathy; her son Chris Ferrell and daughter-in-law Molly Boyd, and her grandchildren Jackson, Patrick and Walden; her son Roger and daughter-in-law Caroline Ferrell, and her grandchildren Bennett, Emmie, Isaiah, and Sam, and his wife, Julie; her son Justin and daughter-in-law Jessica, and her grandchildren Isabel and Jonah; her stepdaughter Maria Pokluda and her

husband, Brian, and her grandchildren Ashby, Reese, Wes and Dalton; and her stepson Paul and his wife, Lisa, and her grandchildren Mary, Nick and Maggie.

Due to the current situation with coronavirus, the funeral will be a small graveside service with family. Later there will be a celebration of life for all of her friends and family. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge in Charleston, SC.

Cemetery Details

Mountain View Memorial Park formerly Grand View Memorial Gardens

7 Duncan Rd.
Travelers Rest, SC

Tribute Wall

GC

“ So sorry to hear of Gayle's ascension. She will be missed from the Greenville Chautauqua audience.

Greenville Chautauqua - February 10, 2021 at 03:43 PM

CH

“ 6 files added to the album Gayle



Chris - May 22, 2020 at 08:19 AM

JR

“ Don, I'm so sorry to hear this sad news. I know you will carry on with courage and fortitude during this difficult time, and I hope you know that your Furman friends still care deeply for you and Gayle.
Judy Romano

Judith Romano - May 19, 2020 at 12:05 PM

TB

“ Don and family, I'm so very sorry to learn of Gayle's passing. Many prayers for all of you during this extraordinarily difficult time.



Tina Hayes Ballew - May 18, 2020 at 05:24 PM

AS

“ Thinking of you during this most difficult time. She was a loving caring person and will be sorely missed. May you feel the love and support of the entire Christian community,

Sincerely, Al Sherbert

Al Sherbert - May 14, 2020 at 10:34 PM

CR

“ Don I'm so sad about Gayle leaving you. She was always so kind and thoughtful during my too few meetings at your place. May God give you courage to go on with her only in your memories My thoughts are with you.

Charlie

Charlie Raisner - May 13, 2020 at 08:23 PM

EF

“ Don, I'm so very sorry. One thing that was clear about Gayle from the beginning was she had an understanding heart, great warmth and that her hope was in Jesus Christ. I always thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and Gayle when you all came by the store before my retirement. Ecclesiastes tells us that God has placed eternity in every human heart. Gayle is with God . We will all meet again.
Erwin Frazier..... "Publix"

Erwin Frazier - May 13, 2020 at 12:38 AM

BS

“ So sorry to learn this.

Brian Siegel

Brian Siegel - May 12, 2020 at 09:57 AM

JC

“ Don,

Wade and I send love to you and all your family. While we didn't know Gayle very well, your love and adoration for her was always so apparent. It's a joy to see such affection, devotion and shared adventure in a marriage. Our deepest sympathies to you my friend,

Jean Childress and Wade Worthen

Jean Childress - May 12, 2020 at 08:53 AM

CG

“ When I learned that Gayle died, I instantly breathed a prayer, and then fondly recalled the first time I met her. You were having dinner together at Monterrey. This was before you were married, and what struck me was the joy and happiness on both your faces. Even now, I can close my eyes and see you in a booth, side by side, new and shiny, You probably don't remember it, but you surely will never forget the happiness and joy you have shared. How wonderful the memories you and Gayle made together, are yours to keep.

With deepest sympathy, Cydelle

Cydelle Guth - May 11, 2020 at 11:09 PM

JH

“ Freddie and I are so saddened by the loss of Gayle! We have so many fond memories of our 1995 Foreign Study trip and the relationship which carried on thereafter. You all were a significant part of our Furman experience and we are both thankful for the time we shared. Dr. Aiesi- please know you and your family will be in our prayers. Sending love and warm wishes.

Jana and Freddie Heroman FU-Class of 1997

Jana Heroman - May 11, 2020 at 02:16 PM

NG

“ Don, I am so sorry to hear of Gayle's passing. I enjoyed our many visits together and will miss her.

Nancy Griffeth - May 11, 2020 at 01:25 PM

CC

“ Dear Don and family,

My heart goes out to each of you. I know Gayle served as a shining light for you and so many. Please know that your Furman friends and colleagues are with you in spirit and keeping you close in our thoughts and prayers.

Connie Carson

Connie Carson - May 11, 2020 at 01:17 PM

LS

“ *Gayle was a wonderful woman. She was beloved by so many. Furman students really considered her a second "mother" in so many ways, as she was so welcoming and supportive. She was kind to everyone and always made you feel special. She will be deeply missed. Sending all my love to Don, her children and the rest of the extended family. Sincerely, Liz Smith*

Liz Smith - May 11, 2020 at 01:09 PM

RA

“ *Dr. Aiesi - My heart and love are with you, and you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers as always. "He will not leave you comfortless..." Robyn Andrews, Furman.*



robyn andrews - May 11, 2020 at 12:58 PM

MS

“ *What a lovely description of a very lovely lady, Don. Thinking of you and your family with sincere sympathy and prayers for peace. Take care. Michelle Shaw, Furman*



Michelle Shaw - May 11, 2020 at 12:52 PM

LW

“*Gayle was a wonderful person that I had the privilege of meeting in 2005; she and I would occasionally email each other for information with regard to our work. Gayle and I were Facebook Friends and I would follow both she and Don's trips and we would comment on each others' pages too, from time to time. She was a wonderful person who loved her family and others, and always tried to help people that reached out to her! I am saddened that she has passed on from this life, but excited for the life she lives now in Heaven with her Heavenly Father; the hope of meeting again is a very comforting thought for those that are Saved by the Grace of Jesus! I have known Don for many years too; he taught my Mother Political Science years ago at Furman, and while I attended Furman, I never had the privilege of being in one of his classes; he is a very nice and smart person who I have great respect for. I will be praying for and remembering Gayle's three sons and ALL of her blended family in the days to come. God Bless! Lisa L Williams, Seneca, SC.*

Lisa L Williams - May 11, 2020 at 11:49 AM

WM

“*Don, we were so sad to hear that Gayle had passed away. We're sending our sincerest condolences, and we wish you peace, comfort, and strength during this sorrowful time.*



With love and heartfelt sympathy, Warren & Sharon Madden

Warren & Sharon Madden - May 09, 2020 at 04:09 PM

SF

“ *Sara Ellen,Ron, Elizabeth, Katie, Ford purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Gayle Bennett Aiesi.*



Sara Ellen,Ron, Elizabeth, Katie, Ford - May 07, 2020 at 01:13 PM