

# Miriam Hood had hundreds of children

*She taught for 30 years  
and was always vigilant  
about student grammar*

IT'S A MATTER  
OF LIFE...



Gerry  
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always correcting our grammar, either written or spoken. She always wanted us to speak correct English," Libby said.

Niece Patricia Worley said, "We wrote 'thank you' notes - which she would correct in red and mail back to us." Miriam remembered her siblings' families each Christmas with a proof silver dollar.

## Country ham secret

"She was a woman of the South and very proud of it," Helen said. Miriam taught Helen, a great cook and a professional food writer, a secret about cooking country ham. "Roll the slices with a rolling pin until they're very thin. Slap them on a hot pan, get them good and hot, turn it over then take it right out," Miriam said.

"Two years ago the new Matthews Library was dedicated," said Buddy Collins, a friend of 26 years. "She had a lot to do with raising money for that library. She worked hard calling people, and donated considerably herself."

Buddy's wife Pat said, "She had a lot of passions. Blessed Assurance (Adult Day Care) was one of them, especially. She really believed in helping the underprivileged." Miriam saw value in all people of all races, Pat said. "She wanted to be around young people all the time - she loved them and she lived with a youthful heart."

"At 90, she'd take cookies to the senior center she had a beautiful heart," Buddy said. Miriam was older than most who enjoyed her treats.

"On her 90th birthday the town council honored her and gave her keys to the city. Mayor Lee Myers thought the world of her," said Pat.

"She loved the town. If someone asked where she was from she said, 'I'm from Matthews,'" Buddy said. "She was very proud of the little town of Matthews."

And it's a safe bet that the little town of Matthews is very, very proud of Miriam Hood.

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It was a well-known fact that she had her finger in many a Matthews political pie. It was even said that if you wanted to get elected, you'd need to call Miriam Hood.

Miriam Elizabeth Padgett Hood, who was the first lady of Matthews for the 18 years that her husband was mayor, died July 26 at age 91. She had taught at Matthews Elementary and at McClintock Middle schools for 30 years.

"She was an influence far larger than she could have imagined," said former student Richard Klein. Hood

"She knew no limits for the learning experience. She believed in every student and that person's potential. She prepared everyone for life."

It was a bad secret, Richard said, that "she was a lifelong, devoted Democrat; her husband, Lex, was deeply involved in Democratic politics."

Miriam had met Lex, an architectural engineer, when she came to Matthews in 1935 to teach. They were married two or three years later until his death in 1977. Though childless, she looked upon her nephews, nieces and students as her own.

## Hundreds of children

"One of the things you always remember," said good friend Helen Moore, a retired Observer writer, "is the absolute devotion of her former students. They would run up and throw their arms around her, and she loved every one of them. If someone asked if she ever had children, she said, 'Oh, but I had hundreds of them.'"

Niece Libby Gay recalled a time when her aunt took a group of nieces and nephews swimming. Libby said, "Look how good I can do this." Miriam called her out of the pool, corrected her grammar, "Look how well I can do this," and made her sit out for a while. "She was forever a teacher,