



Kathy Baxter

March 22, 1944 - May 19, 2025

Kathleen Ann Baxter

Librarian, Educator, Author, Advocate for Children's Literature and Children's School and Public Library Services

Kathleen Baxter, a passionate advocate for children's literature and libraries, passed away May 19, 2025. Born in Tracy, Minnesota, she grew up on a small farm near Walnut Grove and later lived in Queens, Kew Gardens, New York, Minneapolis, and Coon Rapids.

Kathy earned a BA in Library Science from the College of St. Catherine and an MA from the University of Minnesota. Her career began as a children's librarian with the Queens Borough Public Library, and continued at Anoka County Library in Blaine, Minnesota, where she held leadership roles from 1969 until her retirement in 1995.

A gifted musician, speaker, and teacher, Kathy taught children's literature at the College of St. Catherine and presented widely at library and education conferences. She wrote a long-running column, *The Non-Fiction Booktalker*, for *School Library Journal*, and authored several popular books encouraging kids to read non-fiction. As a national consultant for the Bureau of Education and Research, she gave workshops across the United States.

She served on the 2001 Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, Newbery Medal Committee and worked as a publishing consultant for Capstone. A lifelong champion and mentor of Minnesota authors, Kathy co-founded the Maud Hart Lovelace Society and wrote *My Betsy-Tacy Miracle* and *The Betsy-Tacy Songbook*.

Kathy was passionate about genealogy and travel-especially to England. She was also a devoted Broadway aficionado who could sing nearly any show tune from memory. She attended hundreds of performances in New York, London, and locally, and her love for musical theater was a defining joy throughout her life. She was a superb pianist with a beautiful voice, who loved to play and perform.

She is survived by her husband, Riley Harrison; brother, Leo (Terry) Baxter; niece, Kelly (Mike) Comiskey; nephew, Jason (Debbie) Baxter; and many dear friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, John E. and Audrey Little Baxter.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel (5000 W. 50th St., Edina) on June 10, 2025 at 2:00PM and will be followed by a time of sharing. The Celebration of Life will also be live streamed for those who cannot join us in person. To view, click on the "tribute wall" page above and click on the video feed. The webcast will be accessible 5 minutes prior to the service time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Betsy-Tacy Society <https://www.betsy-tacysociety.org/donate> or to the Friends of the Kerlan Collection, the University of MN Children's Literature Research Collection. z.umn.edu/kerlanfriends

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 10. 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Celebration of Life for Kathleen Ann Baxter in memory of Kathy Baxter



Washburn-McReavy - May 22, 2025 at 01:49 PM

WA

Vocalist: Norah Long
Pianist: Richard Long

Washburn-McReavy - June 10, 2025 at 04:57 PM

BC

“ Barbara C. purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of Kathy Baxter.



Barbara C. - June 10, 2025 at 12:06 AM

BC

“ Barbara C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kathy Baxter.

Barbara C. - June 10, 2025 at 12:06 AM

KT

“ *Kathi Pietz Dwelle, & Laurel Kassel Tadd purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Kathy Baxter.*



Kathi Pietz Dwelle, & Laurel Kassel Tadd - June 03, 2025 at 04:26 PM

CB

“ *Forever in your heart.*

Sincerely, Charles A. Baxter, son of Charles J. Baxter, grandson of Charles C. Baxter

Charles Andrew Baxter - May 30, 2025 at 10:37 AM