



# Eleanor Smith Montgomery

SEP 29, 1940 - JUL 7, 2025



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# Eleanor Smith Montgomery

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**L**ong may the queen reign in our hearts. Every day was a gift to her. Every day with her was a gift. She lived her life with strength, passion, and joy. Now, there will be an emptiness – a crown is growing dust on a shelf without her.

Eleanor (Ellie) Smith Montgomery aka Hilliard Seeley, 84, of Madison, Virginia, passed away on July 7, 2025 after an extended battle with cancer.

Born 29 September 1940, Eleanor Montgomery was the only child of Dr. Bertram H. Smith, M.D. and Georgine J. Smith in Haddon Heights, New Jersey. Eleanor attended Haddonfield Friends' School and Moorestown Friends' School. Her childhood included summers at Cape May where she met her life-long friend, Linda, at the age of seven.

Eleanor graduated from Allegheny College in Pennsylvania. After completing her studies, Eleanor taught in Fairfax County Schools before moving to Culpeper where she continued teaching. Soon, she became known as “The Queen” to her students – a title she relished. The Queen, who always wore her trademark long earrings, greeted her “royal subjects” daily with nicknames she had bestowed upon them.

The Queen had rigorous standards for them and for herself. Eleanor was never shy to wield her poison pen and ‘attack’ papers her students had written. Write and revise was the mantra in her class. Despite their initial protests, students unanimously agreed their writing improved dramatically during their tenure in the Queen’s class. In fact, based on their writing acumen, several of the Queen’s students excelled in or were exempt from introductory college English classes.

In 1991, Eleanor married her dear friend and companion, Ron Montgomery.

Eleanor never sat still. She taught, clerked for auctioneers, sold antiques, and read when she was not enjoying travel and friends. Over time, Ellie became a pillar in the community as she worked



## Obituary

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with Chaplains Wings, Madison Matters, Madison Cares, the Madison County Food Bank, American Legion Auxiliary Post 157, and church groups. Eleanor's hundreds of hand-knitted hats and scarves are warming soldiers around the world, while Madison County's Sheriff's office will miss her treats, cookies, and desserts. Her amazing care packages and letters to military chaplains and soldiers will be missed as will her vocal support of the community at the Madison County Board of Supervisor meetings.

Eleanor was predeceased by her adoptive parents, and her biological mother, Helen Merrell whom she found when she was 77. She is survived by her husband Ron, her son Bert Hilliard and his wife Amy, her grandchildren: Lexi Whitbeck (Andrew), Hope, Joshua, and great-granddaughter and delight, Rue. She is also survived by her brothers Michael Merrell (Sus) and Brian Merrell (Cheryl), her stepchildren Peter Montgomery, and Timothy Montgomery (Kathryn), and her step-grandchildren (Katelyn, Justin, Madison, Jax).

Ellie leaves an immense number of friends and acquaintances who are each better for having known her. She was an illuminating presence and brightened many lives. She lived a life of service, dedicated to her students, her family, her friends, and her community. She never met a challenge she could not face with a smile or a person with whom she did not want to join in conversation. She had a zest for people of all walks of life and never met a stranger; the world was full of new possibilities and new friendships.

Family and friends are grateful for the visits and texts from Pastor Brad and the many cards from those who attend Reformation Lutheran Church. We have the greatest gratitude and appreciation for Dr. Romano and the Sentara Oncology Department and healthcare providers.

They

helped her in her final battle and made her life a bit more bearable with their dedication and care.

Our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Bethanne Elbert, Eleanor's PC for over twenty years. We also thank the Hospice of the Piedmont and those who cared for Eleanor, Darcy Edwards, nurse; Lisa Stone, social

worker, and Dr. Kelly Mitchell. Finally, the family thanks the staff at Martha Jefferson House for taking care of Eleanor in her final days and allowing her to pass with dignity. May we all rest well knowing that God has indeed saved the queen.



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The family will receive friends on Friday, August 1, 2025 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Reformation Lutheran Church, 601 Madison Road, Culpeper, VA.

A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 1 p.m. at Reformation Lutheran Church with Pastor Brad Hales officiating.

The family asks that donations be sent to Reformation Lutheran Church, 601 Madison Road, Culpeper, VA 2701, or to Hospice of the Piedmont, 675 Peter Jefferson Pkwy, Ste 300, Charlottesville, VA in honor of the deceased.

An online obituary and guestbook are available at [www.foundandsons.com](http://www.foundandsons.com)

Found and Sons Funeral Chapel of Culpeper is serving the family.



# Events


**Eleanor Smith Montgomery**

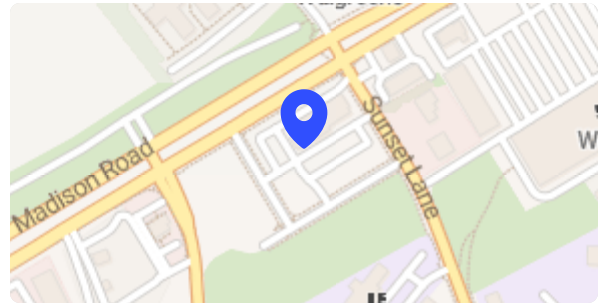
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## Visitation

 **Friday**, August 1, 2025

 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET


 **Reformation Lutheran Church**  
601 Madison Rd., Culpeper VA 22701

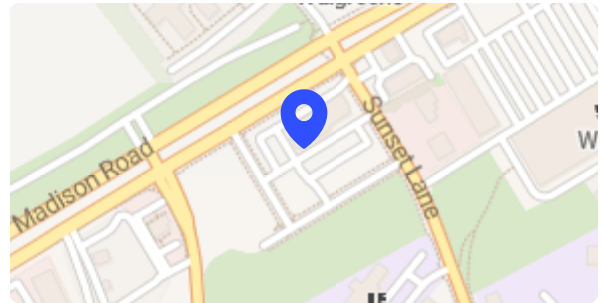


## Celebration of Life

 **Saturday**, August 2, 2025

 1:00 PM ET

 **Reformation Lutheran Church**  
601 Madison Rd., Culpeper VA 22701





## Tribute Wall

**Eleanor Smith Montgomery**

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**Anonymous** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Eleanor.

August 1 at 1:21 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Sweet Tranquility Basket to the Montgomery family.

August 1 at 1:21 PM



**Teresa Giles Hurlock** posted:

Mrs. Montgomery was my 10th grade English teacher at CCHS, 48 years ago. She was one of the toughest teachers I ever had, the only one who ever gave me a "0" on a paper because I plagiarized one sentence. I never did that again! She was a great teacher, one I will never forget. My heartfelt condolences to her family.

July 31 at 2:01 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Fairest of All to the Montgomery family.

July 31 at 7:17 AM



**Anonymous** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Eleanor.

July 31 at 7:17 AM





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**Marian Reed** posted:

My deepest sympathies to Ron, Bert and all Ellie's loved ones. Ellie and I met our freshman year at Allegheny College while singing in the Chapel Choir. Our friendship deepened when we became sorority sisters in Alpha Gamma Delta. We lost contact after graduation but renewed our friendship at our 50th Reunion. I am so grateful for having Ellie in my life which I told her when she let me know the "cancer was winning."Marian Riley Reed

July 30 at 7:18 AM



**Kathey Scott-Logan** lit a candle in honor of Eleanor.

Kathey Scott-Logan lit a candle in memory of Eleanor Montgomery

July 28 at 8:59 PM



**Lynn Dorsey** lit a candle in honor of Eleanor.

My deepest condolences to the family. I was saddened to hear of The Queen's passing. I remember Mrs. Seeley as my high school English teacher...aka Queen of the Poison Pen. To this day, compliments of Mrs. Seeley, I do not use the words "get" and/or "got" when writing. Many, many, many years later...she definitely made a lasting (positive) impression on me in my life. She was a pioneer of her time and truly a jewel to all of her students.

July 20 at 7:09 PM



**Leanne Kelly** posted:

Eleanor was a special special friend! I cannot pick one event that caused me to enjoy every minute I got to talk to her, spend time with her - she was always a pleasure! She fought a great fight to be healthy and stay here with Ron and Bert! Years ago when I had had an accident, she bought so much when she visited me, food, flowers, her bright spirit, laughter and her pureness! Fly high and let angels lead you to paradise, my friend!

July 14 at 4:23 PM



## Tribute Wall

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EL

**Ed Lyons** posted:

Queen Ellie was a wonderful teacher and made me a much better writer. When you submitted your writing, you knew it would be returned with much red ink for your expected revisions. The hardest teachers are the best teachers. She will be remembered fondly. My condolences to Bert and family.

July 14 at 8:39 AM

LS

**Lisa Stone** lit a candle in honor of Eleanor.

Lisa Stone lit a candle in memory of Eleanor Montgomery

July 14 at 4:36 AM



RK

**Rose Kendrick** posted:

Ellie was indeed a delightful lady that I met at Reformation Lutheran. We bonded instantly as we both have a love of yarn and crocheting/knitting and made many hats and scarfs for school children and HOPE for Appalachia children Another project that she presented to our evangelism group was Our Military Matters, which was near and dear to my heart as my dad and 5 uncles served in WWII. The care packages and letters sent to our soldiers brought us great pleasure thanks to Ellie. She served with a servants heart and will be missed by all who had the honor of knowing her.

July 14 at 1:51 AM

AU

**Amy Umberger** posted:

I was one of the Queen's subjects years ago. She inspired me to major in English, and when I entered my teaching program in college, I intended to be a high school English teacher. I ended up switching to elementary, and have spent 25 years of my career as a reading specialist. Her influence is stamped clearly all over my life, and I will be forever grateful for her influence. I'm sending her family so much love during this difficult time.

July 13 at 11:14 PM

TS

**Tish Smyth** posted:

Ellie, You were a beautiful example of the love of Jesus! You will be missed by many of us. I thank God that you crossed my path during this lifetime!Tish Smyth

July 13 at 5:14 PM



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ET

**Ellie Tarbous** posted:

Eleanor was one of the loveliest people my husband and I had ever met. When we moved to Malvern 11 years ago, she was so friendly and welcoming to us. She brought us flowers from her yard which still grow now in ours. I will never forget her kindness and thoughtfulness.

July 13 at 5:53 AM

BR

**Becki Reid** lit a candle in honor of Eleanor.

Becki Reid lit a candle in memory of Eleanor Montgomery

July 12 at 7:34 PM



GB

**Glenn Banks** posted:

Mrs. Sealey was the driving force on me graduating on time. With her persistent words of encouragement and stiff punches on the shoulder. Forty Five years later she still sticks out as my most memorable teacher in CCHS. Condolences to the family 🙏

July 12 at 5:22 PM

CZ

**Carol Zeller** posted:

Ellie was something unique in so many ways. I recall our summer days at Cape May with beach days and boardwalk dancing at Convention Hall. We had such fun planning to accidentally visit with our current crushes. Of course, I had the pleasure of visiting with Ron and Eleanor in Madison. What a joy to share so memories of Eleanor. God Speed.

July 12 at 4:01 PM

LB

**Loretta Whorton Becker** lit a candle in honor of Eleanor.

Eleanor Smith Montgomery was one of my all time favorite teachers. I am saddened to hear she had to fight the cancer battle, and very saddened to hear of her passing. My deepest condolences to her family and friends. She was a bright light to the world.

July 12 at 4:16 AM





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**Liz Berry** posted:

I never had Queen Eleanor as a teacher, but we used to have earring "competitions" when I was in high school. She was a wonderful and endearing person and so much fun! She will be sorely missed by many. Rest in peace Queen Eleanor. ❤️❤️

July 12 at 2:40 AM



**Don Davis** posted:

Among the many things I loved about Ellie was her infectious laugh. She is greatly missed.

July 11 at 8:20 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Eleanor by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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