



Patricia Lee Parrish Harris

April 2, 1936 - June 1, 2025

With heavy hearts, we share the passing of Patricia Lee Parrish Harris, who died peacefully on June 1, 2025, in Cary, North Carolina, surrounded by family. She was 89.

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, on April 2, 1936, Pat was the daughter of Dr. Bernard Lee Parrish and Eva Fogg Parrish. She grew up with a deep love of learning, a curiosity about the world, and a joyful love of and interest in others—qualities that would define her life.

Pat graduated from Randolph-Macon Woman's College (now Randolph College) and remained a proud and loyal alumna throughout her life. In 1960, she married Henry G. Green and began a life of global adventure as part of the U.S. Air Force community. From Colorado to California, Turkey to England, Pat embraced the diversity of cultures and places, later saying she never regretted the marriage for the rich experiences it brought—and most importantly, for the two children it gave her.

Returning to the Norfolk–Virginia Beach area in the early 1970s, Pat found her calling in education. She spent decades shaping young lives as a teacher across elementary, middle, and high schools in the Norfolk Public Schools system, a role she approached with both dedication and warmth.

The great joy of her later years began when she met the love of her life, Col. (Ret.) John Brooks Harris, at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach. They married in 1988 and shared a bond rooted in faith, service, and community. Together, they devoted themselves to causes they believed in—especially their work with Lee's Friends, a Norfolk-based nonprofit that supports individuals living with cancer and their families.

In 2009, Pat and Brooks relocated to Cary, NC, recognizing the importance of family in their final chapters. Pat's last years were filled with simple joys: time spent with children and grandchildren, sitting quietly in the sunshine, and laughter that stitched together a life well-lived.

Pat is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Brooks Harris. She is survived by her sister, Judy Parrish of Mount Jackson, VA; her children, Catharine Green Staley (Fred) of Apex, NC, and Bernard Kyle Parrish (Laura) of Cary, NC; and by six grandchildren who brought her endless pride: Sarah Staley Arthur (Ryan), Lane Parrish, Parry Staley (Morgan), Leah Parrish, Paige Parrish, and Nathan Parrish. Pat was also blessed by her great-grandchild, Ellis Arthur, whose presence was a constant source of joy.

She was honored to share bonds with Brooks' children—Mike Harris, Kathleen Keene, and Karen Harris—and their families, embracing them all as part of her life's tapestry.

The family offers deep gratitude to Elaine Little, whose companionship, care, and advocacy helped make Pat's final years vibrant and dignified. Special thanks also go to the dedicated staff at Brittany Place, whose kindness and professionalism provided a safe and caring home.

Pat's life was marked by grace, generosity, resilience, and steadfast optimism. She had a "glass half-full" view of the world, always believing in the good, even in difficult times. She loved deeply, gave freely, and taught us all how to age with grace. We will miss her presence dearly but celebrate that she is now relieved of the physical ailments that made the last few years much more difficult.

The family will host a small local service in July and will gather for an interment in Virginia Beach later in the year.

Tribute Wall

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“ *When I picture Pat, she is always laughing. I'm so grateful for having met her and Brooks, and the many times we celebrated together.* ”

Ann-Marie - June 12, 2025 at 09:32 PM