



Betty Engel Newman

November 17, 1928 - November 15, 2025

Betty Engel Newman, 96, passed away peacefully at her home in Durham, North Carolina on November 15, 2025.

She was born Bertha Frances Engel on November 17, 1928, the youngest of six children to Paul Frederick and Frieda Goehler Engel of Hanceville, Alabama. She quickly became Betty, a nickname that stuck for the rest of her life. Early on her family moved to nearby Cullman where she graduated from Cullman County High School and attended two years at Sacred Heart College. In 1953 she moved to Lawton, Oklahoma to live with her sister Lucy. She found a secretarial job at Fort Sill, where a chance meeting with a young Army lieutenant, Francis Wesley (Frank) Newman, quickly led to romance and marriage. In 1954 she followed her new husband to the American base in Baumholder, Germany, where their first son Francis Wesley Jr. (Wes) was born. Over the years of Frank's military career, the couple were stationed back at Ft. Sill (where their second son Paul was born), in Tuscaloosa, Alabama (where third son John was born) and in Bangkok, Thailand.

After Frank's retirement from the Army, he and Betty settled into civilian life in Montgomery in 1972. That life was disrupted when Frank suddenly died two years later. With three teenage sons to support, Betty returned to college at age 46, earning a B.A. with high honors from Auburn University and a Master of Social Work from Florida State University. She then began a career as a

social worker, first for Montgomery County Social Services and eventually for the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources, where she rose to the position of statewide supervisor of contract services. She retired in 1995 and lived quietly in Montgomery until 2020, when she relocated to Durham, North Carolina to be near her sons Wes and John and their families.

Betty was a lifelong member of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, a dedicated Red Cross volunteer, an avid reader and New York Times crossword-puzzler, a lover of animals who delighted in her Siamese cats and in the baby bluebirds born in the nesting houses in her backyard, and a loving grandmother who rejoiced at the birth of three great-grandsons in the last year of her life.

She was preceded in death by her husband Lt. Col. Francis W. Newman; her parents; her son Paul F. Newman; her daughter-in-law Tracey Baker; her brother Alfred Engel; and her sisters Helen Engwall, Lucille Lueck, Margaret Plunkett and Edythe Nesmith. Survivors include her sons Francis W. (Elizabeth) Newman Jr. and John A. Newman; grandchildren Kathryn Newman, Alison (Alex) Newman and William (Colleen) Newman; and great-grandchildren Felix Watkins, Forrest Newman and Connor Newman.

A graveside funeral service will be held in Cullman at 11:00 AM on Saturday, November 22, 2025 at Cullman City Cemetery with the Rev. John Bussman officiating. Visitation will be from 10:00 AM-11:00 AM on Saturday, November 22, 2025 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The family suggests a memorial donation to Lutheran World Relief (www.lwr.org) in lieu of flowers.

Cemetery Details

Cullman City Cemetery

821 Lessman Cir SW
Cullman, AL 35055-5201
(256) 734-3833

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **22**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St Paul's Lutheran Church
513 4th Ave SE
Cullman, AL 35055-4398
(256) 734-3575

Graveside Service

NOV **22**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Cullman City Cemetery
812 9th St SW
Cullman, AL 35055
(256) 734-3833

Tribute Wall



“ *Tim Neal lit a candle in memory of Betty Newman* ”



Tim Neal - November 19, 2025 at 03:59 PM