



Mattie Rose Bennett Stuart

June 20, 1938 - April 28, 2025

Mattie Rose Bennett Stuart was born June 20, 1938, in Anguilla, MS, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. She died Monday, April 28, 2025, in East Northport, NY, Hospice House. She was 86.

Mattie Rose was an only child but never lacked for family. She was a southern, country girl who was raised in a small, tight-knit community where people helped each other, called Straight Bayou, Mississippi.

When she was a girl, Mattie and her parents moved in with her maternal grandmother, Mattie Porter, one of her namesakes, to help with Porter's country store while her sons were off to war during WWII. Mattie was such a chatterbox and was always playing with the kids at the two-room school house across the street, so they let her start first grade at five years old. That meant she graduated high school at 16. She loved telling that story in both pride and embarrassment!

Right after high school, where Mattie was a champion basketball player, she left Straight Bayou to attend nurses training in Vicksburg, MS. While there, she made life-long friends and heard an army recruiter who told her class they could "help the soldiers." She raised her hand, along with many other girls, only she was the lone student to actually follow through and enlist.

Mattie Rose ended up in Denver, Colorado, assigned to labor and delivery of all places, not exactly the “helping the soldiers” she imagined! It was there she met Richard, a quiet young doctor from rural Ohio doing his residency on an OBGYN rotation. After a few months, the other nurses grumbled about how quiet this young doctor was and that he didn’t talk to anybody. She held up her left hand, wriggling her fingers so the light would catch the diamond ring newly slipped onto her fourth finger. “Well, he talked to me!” she recounted with a giggle and playful twinkle in her eye all these years later.

Till Richard’s dying day, he thought Mattie was adorable. He would often trick her into saying what pastry is made with pecans or what meat comes from pigs. He always found it funny that with her southern drawl she could turn “pie” and “ham” into three-syllable words!

What won Richard over first was that initial day on the delivery ward, when Mattie Rose clocked out at the end of her shift with a wave saying, with all sincerity, “Have a happy baby day, y’all!” When he asked her out, his first question was to ask if she were a Christian. The answer was a deal-breaker for him, really for both of them. She said yes, and that he even asked sealed it for her. They were married six months later before he could be transferred away from her. Even then, it was another six months before she could be compassionately discharged, so she could join him. She was only 21 years old.

Richard served in the army for over 30 years with Mattie by his side. They traveled the world and took their two kids with them almost everywhere. It helps put your troubles in perspective when you can glimpse how big the world is, and God is even bigger. They instilled that in their kids, too. Richard retired from the army and continued to practice medicine in New Orleans, LA, so Mattie Rose could be closer to home.

Mattie and Richard relocated back to her family home in Mississippi after they lost their home in New Orleans to hurricane Katrina in 2005. They began driving up to Buffalo, NY, (with Mattie doing all the driving) to visit with her daughter and her family and to get out of the southern heat which wasn't good for Richard. Mattie finally became a New Yorker full time after Richard died in 2012, and it allowed her to never miss a grandkid's game, concert, graduation or holiday. Her son often made the trip up from St. Louis, MO, so everyone could be together making wonderful memories and having new adventures.

Mattie's family is grateful to The Hospice House in East Northport for showing such tender kindness to Mattie Rose and her family in the last few days. Her family, including her grandson's fiancé and granddaughter's boyfriend, gathered around her. The last things Mattie Rose heard were prayer, the Word of God, laughter and singing. Maybe those were the first things she heard in heaven, too.

Mattie Rose was preceded in death by her wonderful parents, Louis Franklin Bennett and Agnes Lurline Porter Bennett, and her beloved husband COL Richard Brian Stuart (Ret). She is survived by her son Douglas Stuart, daughter Kathy Matheny, son-in-law Scott Matheny, grandson Sawyer Matheny and his fiancé Joanna Sanges, granddaughter Avonlea Rosette Matheny and her boyfriend Micah Wallingford, and many dear sisters- and brother-in-law, cousins and friends.

The funeral was held at Straight Bayou Baptist Church on Saturday, April 3rd., 2025

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Straight Bayou Baptist Church, 234 Lane Rd., Anguilla, MS 38721.