



## Elizabeth Jean Hall

October 1, 1953 - May 15, 2023

Elizabeth Jean “Betty Jean” (Zihala) Hall, 69, passed on May 15, 2023, in Alexandria, Virginia.

She was born on October 1, 1953, to the late Bettyann P. (Freeman) and Robert Zihala and raised in Orange/West Orange, New Jersey.

Known throughout her life as “Betty Jean,” she graduated from Mountain High School and pursued her interest in fashion and design at the Traphagen School of Fashion in New York City. After graduation, she moved to Los Angeles, where she worked as a production pattern maker in women’s clothing for several companies in the fashion district. While in California, Betty Jean met Gary Hall, a naval officer stationed there, whom she would marry in 1979. The frequent cross-country moves involved in Navy life meant shifting her career focus to freelance fashion work. She continued to excel at her craft, becoming a designer and production pattern maker for GOBELLE women’s sportswear. Her Spring line was selected as Road Runner magazine’s best Spring women’s sportswear. She was selected to design, produce, and fit outfits for the NBA San Diego Clippers cheerleading team.

Later, being a dedicated full-time mother to her children, Cheryl and Robert, became her primary focus. While doing so, she still found ways to utilize her passion and craftsmanship in clothing design. Examples of her unique skills

were in winning first place at the Woodlawn Plantation Needlework show, smocking and creating outfits for her family, doing countless alterations for friends, and saving the day for many a bride on their wedding day. She could disassemble a garment and re-size it with ease, which always amazed the recipient. She annually altered uniforms for the entire Mount Vernon High School marching band and also found time to work at a women's clothing store and at Mount Vernon Travel.

Betty Jean was kind, thoughtful, and a loving friend to all, generously giving her time to improve the lives of those around her. She initiated a childcare group during church masses. She was continually active in the parent-teacher organizations at every school Cheryl and Robert attended and twice took on the responsibility of leading the Senior Class parents. She was the instrumental guiding force in rebuilding a kayak storage area and accompanying beach/park area which is now enjoyed by so many.

Strongly rooted in her Catholic faith, Betty Jean always saw the good in others and resisted the easy path of giving up on people. It is inconceivable to most the stress and pain she quietly endured and rarely revealed while undergoing 8 ½ years of chemo treatments. During this challenging time, she still embraced life's joys. She enjoyed watercolor painting, photography, kayaking, and her tricks and treasures for her grandkids. Betty Jean also very much loved vacationing with family in Stone Harbor, NJ. She was an adventure seeker who brought so much joy and happiness to those who joined in. Betty Jean particularly admired the nuns at the Poor Clares Monastery in Alexandria, VA and enjoyed actively supporting them through volunteer activities. She always practiced her faith and was thankful for each day and each person she met.

Betty Jean is survived by Gary, her husband of 44 years; their daughter Cheryl Fiest (husband Greg, Tommy 9, and Kate 6;) son Robert (wife Carissa,

Michael 2, and Evelyn 7 months); and siblings William Zihala (Diane), Eileen Harkins (Jim), Kathleen Zihala, and James Zihala. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews whom she loved very much.

A memorial prayer service will be held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, VA on June 16th at 10:30AM. A private interment will be held at Arlington National Cemetery on a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the Poor Clares Monastery 2505 Stone Hedge Dr, Alexandria, VA 22306.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive  
Arlington, VA 22211

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

JUN 16. 10:30 AM (ET)

Good Shepherd Catholic Church  
8710 Mount Vernon Highway  
Alexandria, VA 22309  
<https://www.gs-cc.org/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Enjoyed our annual Progreso Hispano fund raiser dances - thanks*

Thomas Gerard - June 15, 2023 at 04:48 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.*

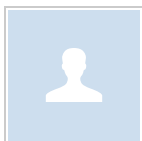


June 15, 2023 at 02:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Elizabeth Jean Hall.

June 14, 2023 at 09:28 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.*



June 14, 2023 at 09:12 PM

JS

“ *Joanne & Kit Stewart purchased the Best of California Wine Gift Basket for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.*



---

**Joanne & Kit Stewart** - June 13, 2023 at 11:47 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.*



---

June 13, 2023 at 08:58 AM

JN

“ *Rest in Peace, Betty Jean! You will always be remembered!*



---

**John and Wil Nichols** - June 12, 2023 at 02:11 PM

YA

“ *Your Friends from The Potomac Advocates purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.*



---

**Your Friends from The Potomac Advocates** - June 12, 2023 at 02:01 PM

FT

“ RIP LIZ.



Frank Titus - June 12, 2023 at 11:59 AM

SS

“ Betty Jean and I were Band moms when our daughters were in high school. I have many memories of bobby pins and hairspray. Betty Jean was always armed with a sewing kit to take care of loose buttons and stubborn zippers. I will always remember her patience, her smile, and the love she had for my daughter.

Shawn M Sharp - June 11, 2023 at 11:16 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



June 11, 2023 at 11:11 PM

WB

“ Wally & Faye Berriman purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



Wally & Faye Berriman - May 30, 2023 at 04:04 PM

DS

“ My dear Betty Jean, that is your first nickname and will always be your name to me. You have been "lifted up by Eagles wings so God can hold you in the palm of his hands." God lent you to me as a sister of the heart who I laughed with, whose shoulders I leaned on countless times. And enjoyed your family the ZiHallas! I was hoping for another miracle but must remember God gave the miracle of you. I know you waited until your mom went to Heaven first and now you are with her and your dear father. Love you Betty Jean and all of your family in turn. You and Gary were naval beans in a pod. May he and your family find comfort in each other and the countless friends who had the Joy and Peace of knowing you. Love you, Diana

---

**Diana Smuda** - May 27, 2023 at 07:50 AM

LB

“ Love, Doc & Deborah Blanchard purchased the *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet* for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



---

**Love, Doc & Deborah Blanchard** - May 25, 2023 at 03:34 PM

LB

“ Love, Doc & Deborah Blanchard planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elizabeth Jean Hall.

---

**Love, Doc & Deborah Blanchard** - May 25, 2023 at 03:34 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



May 24, 2023 at 09:25 AM



“ I called her BJ, she was always cheerful and would lift up others that were in chemo as well. Her and my husband would always talk about Jersey. To the family she is done suffering and at peace, God will care for her and you as well. God Bless Anita Riley

anita riley - May 23, 2023 at 07:44 PM



“ Tom & Diane Jones purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



Tom & Diane Jones - May 23, 2023 at 11:38 AM



“ Super smart; super special. We'll miss Betty Jean along with community and family.

Jon Bridge - May 19, 2023 at 06:27 PM

KD

“ I remember you as a baby, good times in Stone Harbor, visiting you in San Diego when Cheryl was a baby, seeing you in Little Egg. You were in my wedding. Love, Aunt Kathleen

Kathleen D'Andrea - May 19, 2023 at 02:36 PM

DN

“ Don & Becky Nestor purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of Elizabeth Jean Hall.



Don & Becky Nestor - May 19, 2023 at 08:45 AM

DN

“ Don & Becky Nestor planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elizabeth Jean Hall.

Don & Becky Nestor - May 19, 2023 at 08:45 AM

FT

“ RIP Betty Jean.



Frank Titus - May 19, 2023 at 08:11 AM

PR

“ We had the privilege of being her neighbor. On the first day of moving in, Betty Jean came by to introduce herself and offer us delicious vegetable drinks she made herself. She will be truly missed.

---

**Paul and Rose** - May 19, 2023 at 07:49 AM

KH

“ Betty Jean left an impression on each person that she met. The sweetest niece, and friend anyone could ever have. She had the gift of making people feel comfortable. Her gentle spirit and kind way of delegating made you feel good about whatever she gave you to do.

Thank you for the fun time you took me to New York and I had never been there. That trip was amazing. We went on the bus and it was so much fun. You gave us so many wonderful memories we will never forget.

She was so gifted and talented with her hands, came to the rescue when a wedding dress needed to be altered, and would take nothing in return. She gave of herself to so many. Her support and love helped each one that came in contact with her. Always thinking of others.

We love you dearly Betty Jean.

We look forward to seeing you someday soon. I know you and uncle Dick are enjoying each other. I am sure he's making you laugh.

We will miss you till we meet again in Heaven with our Savior.

We love you. Praying for you Gary, Cheryl, Greg, Robert, Carissa, and family.

---

**Kay Hall** - May 19, 2023 at 12:41 AM

VW

“ I had the privilege of working with Betty Jean on band-related activities at our daughters' High School. Her vibrant personality, generous nature, and dedication to our students made a positive impact on the Mt. Vernon band community. Betty Jean always brought a sense of humor and enthusiasm to the band events, always going above and beyond to support our students. Her kindness and positive influence will be remembered by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

*During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with her family, especially her daughter, Cheryl, my daughter's dear friend. May they find solace in her memories and take comfort in knowing that she made a difference in the lives of our Mt. Vernon high school band students.*

*With deepest sympathies,*

*Vikki Wismer and Brittany Wismer Rauner*

---

**Vikki L Wismer** - May 18, 2023 at 04:37 PM

"L

“ BJ was such a beautiful person. She was so positive and always fun to be around. I loved our Valentine dinner/dances at Good Shepherd that she always organized---including this year. She was so thoughtful and always brought little gifts for each of us! I also enjoyed going to their condo in Annapolis and a nice boat ride along the Annapolis water front (thanks Captain Gary!). Also, the Halls always threw the most fun New Year's Eve parties. BJ you will be missed by MANY! Love "George" & Tom Layton

---

**"George" Layton** - May 18, 2023 at 04:34 PM

MH

“ Oh my goodness so so many beautiful memories all our escapades at riverside elementary school, saving us a ton of money on wedding dress alterations, learning how to make cocktails ( although we might need to credit Gary with that one. But if i had to pick one. It was the organization of the first Riverside estates Christmas caroling. We were so bad but had the most fun. Much love to all the Halls!!

---

**Maryrose Hull** - May 18, 2023 at 12:08 PM