



Dru Irene Beattie

December 7, 1932 - January 28, 2026

Drusilla Irene Beattie (Dowling), 93 years old, passed away peacefully at St. Margaret Hospital in Pittsburgh PA, on January 28, 2026. Dru, as she preferred to be called, was born on December 7, 1932 at Kittanning Hospital, in Armstrong County, PA, to Merle Henry Dowling and Hannah Margaret Dowling (Beckwith), who preceded her in death. She was also preceded in death by her daughter Abi Shuman (Gail Spang), her brothers - Merle Dowling, Richard (Dick) Dowling, Harvey Dowling, John Dowling, and sisters - Doris Dowling, Ella Dowling, Hellen Dowling, and Lois (Windy) Heilman (Dowling). Dru is survived by her sons and their spouses. Mike Spang, Beaver (Stephen) Spang (Kelly Spang-McNeice), Kenny Holizna (Laura Holizna-Weick), Regis Beattie (Heather Beattie-Kristofik), plus fourteen grandchildren, sixteen great grandchildren, five nephews and seven nieces. In lieu of a funeral or viewing there will be a celebration of life at her favorite place, Maple Island, in Harmarville PA, date yet to be determined.

Growing up as a child during the great depression created interesting stories, and built in Dru a strong, resilient character. Being the sixth child of nine siblings, with only five living past the age of three, the family was well acquainted with sorrow and perseverance. Her dad was an artist who spent some time as a coal miner, but due to lung issues could not make a career in the mines. Some of Dru's fondest memories were on the farm she grew up on in her childhood. She rode horses, and they had cows and chickens. They

had crops, mostly corn. The house did not have a refrigerator, so they would secure things in the creek or spring house to preserve the perishables. The five siblings had a lot of tales to tell growing up on the farm and the work it took to survive. After the attack on Pearl Harbor happened on Dru's ninth birthday (December 7, 1941), her oldest brother Merle, the family jokester, would say first, "Happy Birthday," then would follow with "this is a day that will live in infamy". Even years after they both left the house they grew up in, Merle would call her on her birthday and say that.

Her Mom and Dad were devout followers of Jesus Christ and they all went to church while living at home. Dru and her sister Lois and her brother Harvey would occasionally be on the radio in Kittanning singing hymns to the guitar. Dru and her sister Windy shared a favorite Hymn, most likely because it was their Mothers favorite, In The Garden. Dru lived in several places in the area, due to her dad being an artist who painted Church murals. He was hired in several area churches to paint murals. They would try to rent a house close to where her dad was getting work. He was also hired by several local buildings, and would make extra income by hiring himself out to paint pictures for folks. He sold paintings, made toys, and sold Christmas trees grown on the family farm to help his family get by.

When Dru left home at sixteen, she lived in Rosston, West Kittanning, and then Pittsburgh. She was an excellent waitress for many years working at The Owl's nest (later called the Cadet) in West Kittanning, Poli Restaurant in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill, and Nino's in the Oakland area of Pittsburgh (later renamed Vincent's). She loved to read, tend to her flower gardens, listen to and sing classic country music, getting together with family or friends for a party or singalongs. Dru's favorite place, in her adult years, was her cottage on Maple Island (known by officials as 12-mile Island) in Hamarville PA. She would boat, ski, swim, sun tan, hangout in the mess hall and have singalongs by the campfire. She loved the Labor Day parades, floor shows, Island safaris,

festivals on the lane, 4th of July activities, volley ball Sundays, bingo, the snake charmer, and the alley cat. Dru was always the life of the party. She liked playing games and having fun. She enjoyed taking care of herself and always looking her best. She especially shined on all and any holidays and made them magical with her traditions, decorations, and excitement.

Dru was only high school educated but she was well read and extremely intelligent, always keeping up with current events. Her love for poetry was evident by the way she could recite numerous long and short poems by memory. Even at the age of ninety-two, after surviving a heart attack and some small strokes, she was still able to recite poems. She never had a lot of extra money to do extravagant things, but she always did more than the best with what she had. Dru could fix, build, reupholster, and paint just about anything. She never stopped working and was always doing something to enhance her house, apartment, or cottage.

She also was very much a family oriented person. She would make sure all of her kids knew their uncles, aunts, and cousins, planning occasions to spend time with them. She was admired by her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and their friends. She had her own way to make each of them feel special in different ways. She could be brutally honest, but you learned to appreciate it eventually. One of the most miraculous and appreciated things she did for her kids was to keep all five of them together through some turbulent and trying times. Even though she worked full time while raising a family, she almost always, with very few exceptions, was able to provide them with lunch and a home cooked dinner. Dru taught her children to pray before bedtime, and would pray with them while tucking them in. They learned and were shown responsibility, work ethic, and life skills to be on their own. She may be gone from this earth, but her legacy lives on in the many people she touched.

At Dru's request, in lieu of a funeral or viewing there will be a celebration of life at her favorite place, Maple Island, in Harmarville PA, date yet to be determined.

Professional services entrusted to Thomas M. Smith Funeral Home & Crematory Ltd; 930 Center Avenue Blawnox, PA, 15238; www.thomasmsmithfuneralhome.com.

Tribute Wall

DG

“ Aunt Dru will be missed by many. She was a loyal sister to my dad. She always called him "Harv. " The two of them had the same twinkling eyes and mischievous grins as they often shared memories of their lives together. He cared for her deeply, and I'm sure he was ready to welcome her home to heaven with some joyous, uplifting singing! Praying for Mike, Beaver, Kenny, Rege, and families as you navigate through your grief. Love, Deirdre

Deirdre Gallaher - February 15 at 03:39 PM

CF

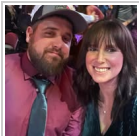
“ Dru you will be missed by many! I will never forget how you came to Florida to take care of your best friend Inez. I know her my mom and Mary are all having a party now. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. Rest in peace beautiful lady. Carolyn Fallavollitti

Carolyn Fallavollitti - February 12 at 11:16 AM

CH

“ Rege to you and your entire family I am so sorry to hear the loss of your mother and a great friend to everyone. Dru was a special person in many ways, and I know the doors of the mess hall in heaven are swinging open to greet her as she is welcome by those who went before her. She may be gone from this earth, but she will never be forgotten. Prayers to all Chip and Cathy Havens.

chip havens - February 11 at 11:54 AM



“ We all loved aunt dru! I will always remember her love for st. Pattys day, her smile and that she always liked to make people laugh.

Courtney Feulmer - February 07 at 06:13 PM

AF

“ Sorry to hear of your Mom’s passing. May you find comfort knowing she is resting in the arms of our Lord.

Sincerely

Anya Holizna Ferguson

Anya Ferguson - February 06 at 11:50 AM

AR

“ I am still trying to wrap mind around it. Her really being gone. She was so - strong! I think I thought maybe she would live forever. Or at least to see 100! What a blessing though, to have had my grandma in my life for 42 years!!! She was so fun. And funny. With zero filter 🤪 She saw so much hardship in her life. But she never lost her sense of humor, or love of a good time. I loved her very much. My fun grandma, with the “college” on the island. Some of my favorite island memories are packing a lunch, and taking the canoe just me and gram up to the sandbar. She taught me how to drive the boat and dock it, just across the river, that summer I stayed up there for a while. Every summer, for my birthday, I would crash the cottage with 7 or 8 of my friends and have a sleepover for my birthday party. After prom party, a group of us went up and crashed at the cottage. My high school graduation party was up the island too. A lot of my very best memories revolve around my gram! Christmas Eve present games - like the hunger games, “may the odds be ever in your favor” 🤪 I don’t think I will ever hear Kenny Rogers’ “Gambler” and not think of her. Gosh, I will miss her! I am SO GLAD we went to the island and visited when Eli and Hannah were little, and she got to meet all my kids, 4 of her great grands.

Amber Reites - February 05 at 10:48 AM

AR

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Amber Reites - February 05 at 10:42 AM

JH

“ *I always considered my gram this immortal larger than life person. I remember being little and she'd just sit on the deck of the cottage with me and we'd just talk. Usually about nothing at all but sometimes she'd tell me what bird was what and what plant was what. I still carry a deep love for her knowledge of gardening she passed on to me as well as a passion for baked goods especially pies! No one baked a mile high apple pie like her. Her light shines on in every happy moment, every silly game, and every Christmas light.*

Jeremy Holizna - February 04 at 01:22 PM