

Patricia Carol Handley

July 4, 1940 · July 9, 2026

Patricia Carol Handley, 86, of Birmingham, Alabama, passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 9, 2026.

Born Patricia Carol Bell on July 4, 1940, in Nauvoo, Alabama, she was the daughter of the late Ocie and Odell Bell. Patricia earned her undergraduate degree in British Literature from Samford University and a Master's in English from the University of Alabama. She devoted her career to education, serving as a college English professor across three states. Teaching was far more than a profession to her; she had a deep desire to see young people succeed, and she worked to prepare them to go out into the world and make a difference.

A woman of steadfast faith, Patricia loved the Lord and was a member of Lakeside Baptist Church in Birmingham. She had a special love for all babies and children, which she poured into her service caring for the two-year-old children at Lakeside. In retirement, she and her husband spent most mornings together in their sunroom, watching the birds gather at their feeder and sharing in Bible study, a quiet ritual that captured the gentleness and devotion at the heart of who she was.

Patricia had a lifelong passion for reading, and she loved being in the kitchen baking with her grandchildren. She and her husband James delighted in traveling together in retirement, seeing new parts of the world, and they especially loved working in the yard, planting flowers, and hiking in the mountains. An avid walker, Patricia cherished any chance to get outside for a walk in nature. Above all, she treasured time spent with her family. Caring by nature, she gave generously of herself to others, including through her work with charities such as Big Oak Ranch and a local women's shelter. She was a talented writer and authored an interesting and endearing autobiography of her life.

Patricia is survived by her husband of nearly 62 years, James Handley; her daughter, Jaima (Jim) Binzer of Birmingham, Alabama; her son, Jason (Shannon) Handley of Charlotte, NC; and her grandchildren, Brooke Handley, Joshua Handley, Catherine Binzer, Mercedes (Bradley) Malain, Jon (Brittney) Binzer, and Alicia (Trent) Wilson, and her great-grandchildren Madi, Isla, Banks, Grayson, Esley, Cora, Jase, and Donovan.

Patricia will be laid to rest at Alabama National Cemetery on Thursday, July 16, 2026. A private service will be held for the family. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests your prayers and kind thoughts for Patricia which will be the greatest comfort for the family.

She will be remembered for her caring heart, her devotion to her family and her faith, and the countless lives she touched through a lifetime of teaching.