



Sunday Salute: Barbara Wyle lived ‘with her eyes fixed on Jesus’

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If your heart was troubled, you would have hoped for someone like Barbara Wyle to be passing your way.

She had a Spidey sense for those who were hurting in life.

“She was never going to pass up an opportunity to see a stranger,” the Rev. Chip Stapleton was saying, “and offer a prayer.”

Barbara Wyle, the preacher would say, was like that throughout her life.

“She had a way of making us feel special,” Stapleton would say. “She went out of her way to make sure we felt love and acceptance.”

She was soft-spoken, slightly built and a gentle woman, with a receptive ear. But when she had something to say, others listened to her words, as well as her wisdom.

“She was a true Southern belle,” the preacher would remind those who came on March 30 to Highland Presbyterian Church to remember Wyle. “And she was, and is, a saint of the church of Jesus Christ. Barbara was without doubt a woman of faith, and a true prayer warrior. She had a tenacious faith.”

And that faith only complemented Ewart Wyle, who served 66 years in the ministry from Texas to Missouri to California to Virginia, and from 2007 until September 2016 as associate pastor at this red-brick church with the tall steeple in Haymount.

Always, she was by his side.

They found one another later in life.

“It was a whirlwind romance,” the preacher would remind us. “There were hours and hours of phone calls.”

He was smitten.

She was, too.

“Their wedding was in Torrey Pines, California,” Stapleton would say, and where they took their marital vows for a seventh time.

They repeated their wedding vows often to one another, Stapleton would say, before saying “I do.” It was just a part of their love for one another, and just another story in their lives that made them such a cute couple.

In recent years, when her health declined, he was by her side and you could see the love and the compassion in his eyes and his every move.

Born Jan. 30, 1931, in Bainbridge, Georgia, Barbara Riddick lived most of her life in New Bern and attended East Carolina University as a young woman. She found her joys in her family, her friends, her book club and the Flora MacDonald Garden Club.

And her Lord and savior, the preacher would say.

“The grass withers,” the Rev. Robert Newman, associate pastor, would offer in prayer. “The flowers fade ... But not your Word.”

The young pastor’s prayer would have been dear to her heart, as Chip Stapleton would attest.

“She may have been small,” he would say, “but she carried a powerful faith.”

Barbara Riddick Wyle died March 26. She was 87.

“She has now been given rest from her labors,” Stapleton would say. “She ran with much joy the race, with her eyes fixed on Jesus.”

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