



## Mrs. Betty L. Cline

January 7, 1922 - December 5, 2013

Betty L. Cline, 91, of Deephaven, Minnesota (formerly of Bluffton); beloved mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and musician extraordinaire; passed away peacefully in the presence of family members at Methodist Hospital in Minneapolis on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2013.

Loving mother of Carol (Tom) Higgins and Bill (Jane Ernst) Cline, both of Bluffton; and David (Judy Ellenberger) Cline of Deephaven; she was devoted to her grandchildren Joy Higgins, April (Jacey) Poulson, Joe Cline, and Bethany Cline; and great grandchildren Ava Poulson and Owen Poulson. She was preceded in death by her parents; her stepfather W. C. Ratliff; her husband, Robert A. Cline, whom she married in 1945; and her granddaughter Amy Higgins.

Betty was born January 7, 1922 in Moores Hill, Indiana, to Charles P. and Olive M. Grimsley. She became a resident of Bluffton in 1932 when her mother became Music Supervisor of the Bluffton schools. She graduated from Bluffton High School in Bluffton in 1939 and was a 1942 graduate of Indiana University School of Music, which she attended on a voice scholarship. She was a Life Member of the Indiana University Alumni Association. In 1998, Betty was inducted into the Bluffton High School Hall of Fame in its inaugural year.

Following her college graduation, she immediately began a teaching career which would ultimately include 24 years of service. Her first teaching position, Supervisor of Music for Washington, Indiana schools, began shortly before

she turned 21 years of age. Betty went on to teach in the schools of southern Wells County – at Liberty Center, Jackson Township, and through consolidation at Southern Wells Junior-Senior High School as Choral Director, retiring in 1976. In this period, she directed oratorio performances in local communities and established a successful swing choir program at Southern Wells. She was a member of the Indiana Retired Teachers Association.

From an early age she was deeply involved in church music, “one of the loves of my life,” she said. She was alto soloist at First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s; held leadership positions in choirs in Bloomington and Washington, Indiana; and from the mid-1950’s to the mid-2000’s was devoted to the music program of First United Methodist Church in Bluffton. After establishing a successful children’s choir program, she succeeded her mother as Director of Music. She became a Diaconal Minister of Music and for more than 35 years continued the growth and development of the music program, leading the esteemed Chancel Choir and founding and directing the Bellaires Handbell Choir. Betty was a member of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers and the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, she was an active participant at Epworth Forest Choir School, holding leadership positions and touring Europe with the School’s Sounds of Hope Chorus.

She cherished her association with sororities Tri Kappa, Delta Kappa Gamma, Sigma Alpha Iota, and her membership in the Foltz Literary Club.

Just as her contributions as a music director and teacher were important to many people, her work as a vocal soloist touched countless listeners in churches and concert halls in cities throughout the region. Those who heard her in her prime, and for many years thereafter, remember a voice of uncommon power and beauty guided by the highest standards of sensitivity to the text being sung. Though she sang primarily oratorio and art song literature, she could also successfully entertain audiences with popular songs. Bluffton residents enjoyed unforgettable performances of “Climb Ev’ry

Mountain” and “Love For Sale” in Tri Kappa’s Red Stocking Follies in the 1960’s and on a more recent occasion, “When You Got It, Flaunt It” and “We’ll Catch Up Some Other Time.”

A friend recently described Betty as “A lady for the ages,” and noted the inspiring effect of her grace, dignity and zest for life.

A funeral service will be held at First United Methodist Church, Bluffton, at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10 with calling one hour prior at 9:30 a.m. There will be calling at Thoma/Rich, Chaney & Lemler Funeral Home on Monday, Dec. 9 from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. with a Tri Kappa Service Memorial Service taking place at 2:30 p.m. Burial will take place at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton. Memorial contributions may be made to the music program of Bluffton First United Methodist Church, Creative Arts Council of Wells County, or The Society of the Friends of Music at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Friends can send online condolences to Betty’s family at [www.thomarich.com](http://www.thomarich.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Elm Grove Cemetery

3500 East State Road 124  
Bluffton, IN

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 10. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church  
325 West Washington Street  
Bluffton, IN

## Service

DEC 10. 10:30 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church  
325 West Washington Street  
Bluffton, IN

# Tribute Wall



“ *Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Betty L. Cline*



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**Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home** - December 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM



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**Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home** - December 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *Mrs. Betty L. Cline*

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September 08, 2022 at 08:26 PM



“ *I was very sorry to hear just recently of Betty's passing. She was a good friend of my grandmother and gave my husband and I a beautiful handmade card for our wedding last year. Please accept my condolences.*

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**Jenni Pastore** - April 06, 2014 at 08:22 PM

RW

“ *To Betty's Family,*

*I was Associate Pastor at First UMC in Bluffton from 1979 to 1982, and worked alongside Betty on a daily basis. I learned to love and respect her for her many gifts and talents, as well as her wonderful friendship. I still have, and use, a Christmas gift she gave to me. It is a travel case for toiletry articles, monogrammed with my initials (LMW). I have always valued it, because it reminded me of her. Now I will treasure it even more. Betty was truly a class lady who blessed many lives on this earth. My heartfelt condolences to you all.*

*Rev. L. Michael Wilson, Retired Minister, UMC*

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**Rev. L. Michael Wilson** - December 19, 2013 at 10:54 AM

SM

“ *I have many fond memories of Betty....I taught with her for many years in the Southern Wells School district... She was a wonderful musician and teacher...young people responded to her in a positive way always....she was also a wonderful friend...My thoughts and prayers will be with her family...I am sure she is singing in Heaven...what a special lady she was....a true joy to know!*

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**Sally Mittlestedt** - December 10, 2013 at 07:10 PM

DJ

“ *Please accept my condolences on the loss of your dear loved one. Take comfort in knowing that our heavenly Creator, will soon remove all pain, sorrow, and death forever! May this promise as recorded in Revelation 21:3,4 be of comfort as you gain the strength and inner peace to cope with the days ahead.*

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**D. Johnson** - December 10, 2013 at 02:34 PM

SC

“ Many fond memories of working with Betty for meetings and workshops for the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts while I lived in Fort Wayne. We didn't meet often, but the friendship continued over the years. Sara J. Collins

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**Sara J. Collins** - December 09, 2013 at 09:59 PM

RH

“ I have many fond memories of Mrs. Cline. She was my music teacher in elementary and jr-hi , and my choir and swing choir teacher at SWHS. A very talented lady. My thoughts and prayers will be with your family.

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**Rachel Hunter** - December 09, 2013 at 04:51 PM

GP

“ To Dave and Judy and family.....I send greetings and love from everyone at St. Luke Presbyterian. We are holding you in our hearts! As Betty said after our prayer service, looking around the bed ringed with loving faces, "Brothers.....Sisters.....of the faith!" Even there, even then.....she was intent on making of us a church! with the Love of Christ.....Gwin

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**Gwin Pratt** - December 09, 2013 at 02:51 PM

DH

“ Please accept our condolences. We have been out of touch for awhile. We will miss you and the good times at the holiday concerts we spent together.

*David & Nancy Hersk*

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**David Hersk** - December 09, 2013 at 02:37 PM

PM

“ We're thinking of you all with loving memories of shared music, food, laughter, poetry, and tears that have connected Deephaven and Bluffton for nearly 40 years. Betty has been a special friend and a surrogate mother and grandmother when ours were no longer with us.

*With gratitude for Betty's beautiful life,  
Jack Mauch, Skip & Phyllis Messenger, Lindsay Messenger & Nils Weisensee, Alex Messenger & Lacey Hoover*

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**Phyllis Messenger** - December 09, 2013 at 08:49 AM

SM

“ Skip and Phyllis Messenger purchased the European Sympathy Dish Garden for the family of Mrs. Betty L. Cline.



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**Skip and Phyllis Messenger** - December 09, 2013 at 08:41 AM

BH

“ Where do I start to tell how Mrs. Cline touched my life? While a student at Jackson, she almost insisted that I take voice lessons. I had always sang but she knew I could do better with some training. The times that she helped the late Mack Shultz and I as we performed for groups around the area. The times she invited me to do a special at her church. It was always a pleasure to do those things for her. A small group of gals from the class of "65" visited Betty shortly before she left to live with her son and his family. She may have been frail, but she still was our "Mrs. Cline". She was one fine lady, a woman of God and a joy to know. My thoughts and prayers are with the Cline family. Brenda (Schweikhardt) Huffman

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**Brenda Huffman** - December 08, 2013 at 09:38 PM

SG

“ *Sandy Gianelli lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Betty L. Cline*



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**Sandy Gianelli** - December 08, 2013 at 08:31 PM

TB

“ *Our heartfelt condolences to Bill and Carol and all the family. Betty Cline will be remembered as a true artist and a classy lady. Our most recent memory of her is when she enjoyed a "drive-by" tour of the beach umbrella display outdoors at the art center in Bluffton. It is touching that she designated the Creative Arts Center as one of her memorial recipients. Our community will miss her influence even as we continue to be inspired by all the lovely values she upheld.*

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**Tom and Maureen Butler** - December 08, 2013 at 06:42 PM

BM

“ *Boyengas, Crannells, Emersons, Fishers, and Mannings purchased the White Sympathy Floor Basket for the family of Mrs. Betty L. Cline.*



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**Boyengas, Crannells, Emersons, Fishers, and Mannings** -  
December 08, 2013 at 10:23 AM

PB

“ *To The Cline Family -*

*My deepest sympathy in the loss of your mother/grandmother - I know she will be greatly missed by so many. She was a grand lady who touched many lives, including mine.*

*Love & prayers -*

*Peggy Barnell*

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**peggy barnell** - December 07, 2013 at 08:13 PM

DR

“ *Bill, Jane, and Family,*

*I was so sorry to hear about your mom. She was one special lady, and I loved to hear her sing. She had such a rich alto voice. We know where you got your love of music, Bill. I am sorry that I will not be able to make it to pay my respects. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Deb Reinhard*

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**Deb Reinhard** - December 07, 2013 at 04:06 PM



SC

“ *Sally (Ellenberger) Conwell lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Betty L. Cline*



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**Sally (Ellenberger) Conwell** - December 07, 2013 at 03:15 PM

SC

*Betty was part of our extended family, and she was a joy to be around. We thank God for such a lovely lady, and her many accomplishments.*

Sally (Ellenberger) Conwell - December 07, 2013 at 03:19 PM

BL

“ One of my favorite people of all time, Betty Cline. She was my high school orchestra teacher and our church choir director. She was an inspiration to me and many others and a true angel at heart. She coaxed me into doing state solo vocal contests that I was scared to death to do. But she had a way of bringing the best talent out of her students and I will be forever grateful for having been at the right place at the right time to have had her for a teacher and later as a friend. God Bless you Betty and your family.

Brad Lewis - December 06, 2013 at 04:15 PM

AR

“ Carol, so sorry to hear about your mother, she was a fabulous lady. Keeping you in my heart and prayers always!  
Angenette



Angenette Reed - December 06, 2013 at 12:41 PM

RK

“ I had Betty for choir and enjoyed her very much, she was a special lady. My prayers for the family at this sad time.  
Rhonda Ryan

rkr721@sbcglobal.net - December 06, 2013 at 09:44 AM

JJ

“ *The Lord's Choir has received a new member with the most beautiful alto voice I have heard in a long time. My thoughts and prayers are with each and everyone of you in you time of "farewell". I have known Betty for a long time and she was one the most talented musicians I have ever come across. I was lucky to be one of her first students with our childrens bell choir program she started at our church. I also was with her for a few summers at choir school camp at Epworth Forest. I can still hear voice ringing in our church and it will for evermore. Once again my thoughts and prayers are with "The Cline Family."*

*Jennifer and Dane Jesse*

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**Jennifer Jesse** - December 06, 2013 at 09:35 AM

CO

“ *A wonderful lady has gone on to the Lord. I was privileged to serve as a co-worker and be Betty's pastor while in Bluffton. Betty was a large part of the Bluffton First UMC music tradition for many years. I enjoyed and will always appreciate Betty's musical experience as a part of my pastoral experience. I will be thinking of the family as you say "farewell" to a mother, grandmother, and friend to many. Pastor Cindy Osgood,*

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**Cindy Osgood** - December 05, 2013 at 01:43 PM