



Doris Miller Atkins

May 16, 1938 - January 5, 2025

Coleman Funeral Home of Oxford

Doris Miller Atkins, 86, of Oxford, Mississippi, passed away at home in the early morning hours of Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025 after a long illness. She was surrounded by her daughter, Paige Atkins Hudgins of Atlanta; her son, Ace Atkins of Oxford and his wife, Angela Moore Atkins; and her faithful companion, her dog, Chico.

She was born Doris Jean Miller in Wetumpka, Alabama, on May 16, 1938, the third of four children of Leila Dickerson Miller and Bogue Miller. Her sisters, Susie Miller Connally of Auburn, Alabama, and Patricia Miller Stevens of Birmingham, Alabama, preceded her in death. Her brother, Bogue Miller, lives in Atlanta.

Doris grew up in Alexander City, Alabama, where she and her sisters, “the Miller girls,” were well known for their free spirits, their beauty, and their athleticism (she often waterskied on nearby Lake Martin). She attended Auburn University with her sisters, where she met her husband, Auburn football star William Ellis Atkins (“Billy”), who became the MVP of Auburn’s 1957 national championship team.

In 1960, she left Auburn early to marry Billy Atkins in Birmingham and moved

with him to Buffalo, New York, where he was playing football professionally with the Buffalo Bills after leaving the San Francisco Forty-Niners. The family followed his playing career to New York City (the Jets, where he was an AFL All Star), back to Buffalo, and then to the Denver Broncos. In the mid-1960s, Billy became the head coach of Troy State University in Alabama and led the team to a NAIA national championship in 1968. Many of Coach Atkins' former players continued to stay in touch with Doris out of respect for their old coach, even 56 years later.

The Atkins family then went back to the National Football League, where Billy coached for the Buffalo Bills, the San Francisco Forty-Niners, the Detroit Lions and the St. Louis Cardinals. Doris set up a beautiful home in every city and made friends across the country. Finally, when Billy retired from coaching to become a scout for the Forty-Niners, the family settled in Atlanta and Auburn, Alabama, with Doris often accompanying Billy on scouting trips.

After Billy died unexpectedly at just 57 years old, Doris began working at the Ravinia Club in Atlanta, where she became an athletic trainer and events coordinator. She traveled often: skiing in Colorado, walking miles on the beach in Florida, and spending a Christmas in Vienna. She became a grandmother in 1993 and spent much of her time spoiling her five grandsons, teaching them to tell jokes, and buying them presents that their parents had previously vetoed. Her grandchildren called her "Ty," because she didn't think any grandmother name quite fit her personality, and she was probably right.

In her late 60s, she moved to Orange Beach, Alabama, where she lived until 2022. She kayaked, learned to sail a sailboat, and took her grandsons to every go-kart track, arcade, and mini-golf tourist trap they asked for. She remained stunningly beautiful well into her 80s.

She loved wearing cowboy boots ever since a childhood obsession with Roy

Rogers and Gene Autry. She didn't like people who took themselves seriously. She was wickedly funny and could convince anyone to do anything, much to the chagrin of her children. She liked giving and receiving prank gifts more than she liked real gifts. She had an impeccable sense of personal style, and if she found something she liked, she bought it in every color. She loved dogs and could train them to do funny tricks through sheer force of her will. In her 80s, she still knew more about football than just about anyone else. She only let her daughter Paige, an interior designer, decorate her house because no one else could be trusted. She had multiple copies of her son Ace's books in every room of her house.

Doris (or Ty) is survived by her daughter Paige and son-in-law Jim Hudgins, her son Ace and daughter-in-law Angela Atkins, and five grandsons: Jake Hudgins, 31, (Kristen) of Eugene, Oregon; Will Hudgins, 29, of San Diego; Josh Hudgins, 25, of Atlanta; Billy Atkins, 17, of Oxford; and Jess Atkins, 13, of Oxford. She has beloved nieces and nephews in Birmingham, North Carolina and Tennessee.

The family has planned a private funeral service.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation in Doris's name to the Parkinson's Foundation or the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

Coleman Funeral Home of Oxford staff is honored to serve the family during this challenging season of life. Online condolences may be left on her Tribute Wall at www.colemanfuneralhomeox.com

Tribute Wall

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“ *I always love being around Doris! She made you feel special!
Wished we could have stayed in better contact with Her. Prayers for
You, Ace and Paige! Sending our Love to you, Greg and Deborah
Fields*

Greg Fields - January 13, 2025 at 10:47 PM