



Martha Ann Daniel

May 21, 1941 - April 28, 2026

Martha Ann Montgomery Daniel passed away on April 28, 2026 in Wake Forest, North Carolina, due to natural causes. She was 84. Mrs. Daniel was born May 21, 1941, in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in north Birmingham in the ACIPCO area. She graduated with honors from Phillips High School in downtown Birmingham and went on to attend the University of Alabama and Jacksonville State University, where she received a Bachelor's degree in political science. Mrs. Daniel lived for a time in Tuscaloosa and Anniston, Alabama, and was for many years a mortgage underwriter in Dallas, Texas.

“She had a tiger-like devotion at the core of her being for those she loved,” says Mrs. Daniel’s son, Tony Daniel. “This included her parents, her sister, and her beloved grandmother, Electa Cooley, who had a big hand in raising her. And she found the best schools for my brother and me. She delivered us to innumerable music lessons, sports practices, youth group meetings, and Scout trips. She was my cheerleader for decades as an adult, and loved her daughter-in-law and grandchildren with total dedication.”

Mrs. Daniel met her future husband at a Civil Air Patrol mixer in Montgomery, Alabama. After marrying, they lived briefly in Tampa, Florida, then moved to

Tuscaloosa to attend college. Mrs. Daniel worked as a secretary in the athletic department there under Paul “Bear” Bryant and during the era of Joe Namath, both of whom she was acquainted with. After Tuscaloosa, she and her family moved to Anniston for a decade, where she sold real estate and finished her college degree at Jacksonville State. She and her family then moved to Dallas, Texas, in 1982, where her husband, Jerry, was a mapmaker for Hunt Oil Company and Mrs. Daniel worked in housing finance.

“My strongest childhood memory is of the numerous camping vacations we took during the 1970s around the American West, particularly the Southwest, for which she had a special love,” her son Tony Daniel continued. “During all of those, there was my mother, cooking us meals on the Coleman stove, showing us natural wonders such as the Grand Canyon, which she adored, the Painted Desert, which was her favorite vista of all time, and the market square in Santa Fe, as well as so many museums and exhibitions, rivers and caverns, and local events beyond measure. It was a magic childhood, and she made it so for my brother and me. Motherhood was her great calling, and she did it to perfection.”

Mrs. Daniel was the widow of Jerry Anthony Daniel, Sr., originally of Anniston, Alabama, and has two sons, Jerry Anthony Daniel, Jr. (Tony), and David Martin Daniel. She is also survived by grandchildren Coker Montgomery Daniel (Cokie) and Hans Hoffmann Daniel. Mrs. Daniel will be laid to rest in the Mount Olive Cemetery near Gardendale, Alabama. A comprehensive account of Martha Daniel’s life can be found in the book Taylor Montgomery’s Walking Stick.

Graveside services will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at 11am at Mt. Olive

Cemetery.

Martha Montgomery Daniel Eulogy

Tony Daniel

Martha Ann Montgomery Daniel was born May 21, 1941. She was the first child of Coker Montgomery and Louise Cooley Montgomery. Little Martha Montgomery was a precocious child. You can look at her youthful photographs and tell that. You can see it in her smile—Martha's intelligence and sense of humor.

Martha grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. The Montgomerys and Electa Cooley lived together in one small house or another in North Birmingham. After the war, Janice Fay Montgomery (1947-2015) came along, and Martha had a sister. Martha continued going to North Birmingham schools until high school. At that point, she attended the big collector high school in downtown Birmingham, Phillips High School.

My mother rode a city bus, not a school bus, from her home in North Birmingham to a stop in front of the Catholic church in downtown Birmingham. She was often early due to the bus schedule, and she would go inside the sanctuary for shelter. Sometimes she would pray there, or meditate. She has done this in other Catholic churches throughout her life.

The nuns at the church in Birmingham were always kind to her, she says. This developed in her an affinity for Catholicism. She later became Catholic for a while, among other denominations she tried out (with my family tagging along) over the years.

In high school, my mother was involved in all sorts of clubs. I've seen some of her yearbooks and have been surprised at the great many activities she was part of. I asked her about her activities once, and she said she did anything that looked interesting to her. She was a very engaged student, and she made

quite good grades.

She was clearly a very talented young woman, and I think everyone had high hopes for her. She herself nursed a secret ambition to be a lawyer later in life, and she tried to push me in that direction, as well. When she finally got her degree from Jacksonville State, it was with a major in political science. It was at that point, I believe, that she was considering going to law school. She never did. It would have been difficult. David and I had to go to college with her help.

She couldn't safely have kids after David, but we kept several foster children while I was growing up, particularly when I was younger. After we moved to Anniston, she took in a series of foster girls, also, some of them from a local orphanage run by a kindly preacher. My mother longed to have a daughter, and she continued to bring girls home until we left Anniston, but never took it up again when she moved to Texas.

One of the high school organizations my mother joined was the youth contingent of the Civil Air Patrol. This was rather a big deal in the 1950s. The Civil Air Patrol would go out and do aerial search and rescues for downed planes and pilots. My parents met in Montgomery, Alabama, at Maxwell Air Force Base, at a mixer for the youth who came to the Civil Air Patrol encampment in mid-August 1958. After my mother graduated from high school, the two of them decided to elope to Georgia. My mother always said no one was opposed to their being together, but that they had decided to elope because they thought it would be romantic.

My father dropped out of Auburn, and he and my mother moved to Tampa, Florida. They lived there for about two years. My mother got a job at the Indian River Fruit Exchange and my father worked using his drafting skills. They ultimately wanted more education, and so they headed back north to Tuscaloosa, where they both enrolled in the University of Alabama. My mother worked in the athletic department as a secretary, and my father got a job at the Alabama Geological Survey as a draftsman. They moved into a small trailer at the Married Student Trailer Park at the University of Alabama. In late

1963, I came along.

Martha had several jobs after the University of Alabama. They moved away for a while, but eventually returned to Tuscaloosa where my brother David was born. Mom weaned both David and me from our bottles by throwing the bottle into the Black Warrior River at the bridge between Tuscaloosa and Northport. My mother told me that the baby fish in the Black Warrior River needed my bottle, and made me feel like I was giving them a great gift.

Martha was mostly preoccupied with working and raising David and me during her twenties and early thirties. When I was old enough, she became a Den Mother in the Cub Scouts. Martha was also involved at my schools, and became president of the PTA for one year at one of them, Skyland Elementary. But the main driver of everything in Tuscaloosa is the University of Alabama. My parents were intimately connected with it from the moment they came to the town to the moment they left.

Mom taught me to swim in the university's faculty and staff pool. She was always a very good, strong swimmer.

One very stark and clear memory I have from Tuscaloosa days was the night my mother, my brother, and I were home alone. The house had a carport covering and the door from the carport led into the kitchen. It was not solid, but was covered with a louvered window of slotted glass panes.

One night my father was away working late, and my mother, David and I, were home alone, when someone came to that door and began to bang on it. My mother gathered my brother and me behind her in the kitchen. We peeked around her to see the outline of a man. He was shaking the locked doorknob and calling out to be let in.

"You've got the wrong address," my mother loudly told him.

He laughed, and said she had to be kidding. This was the right house, the house he was looking for.

She later explained that the guy was drunk out of his mind, which she knew at the time, of course. I was just bewildered by it all. He banged again and again. My mother was armed with a pistol for most of her life. At that time, she

owned a coal-black .22 automatic. She took it from her purse and pointed it at the figure on the other side of the door.

“I’ve called the police. I have a gun here, and I will shoot you,” she told the guy.

In fact, I think there were two men out there, but only one was banging at the door. This guy laughed. My mother pulled back the hammer.

“I’m going to shoot you if you don’t go away right now,” she told him.

After a grunt of disgust, the guy left. And thereby likely saved his own life.

There’s another famous “Martha packing heat” story, as well.

Twice the U.S. Geological Survey sent my father on extended trips for training, and we accompanied him. One trip was to Washington, D.C., where we spent three weeks touring everything in Washington with my mother. She took us to every monument, to the Capitol Building, to the Smithsonian, and to many other museums. We also played in many area playgrounds in the city parks.

While we were there, Martha went to the Library of Congress and the National Archives, where she began doing genealogical research. She discovered a great deal there, and wrote down what she could. She discovered a thorough book on the Montgomerys that had listed Taylor and Fannie, Maria and Gene, but had missed Lizzie’s children and grandchildren, Coker and Revis.

Then there is the big story of Washington. On our tour of the White House, we were lined up and passing inside. There was no metal detector, or it was out of order, perhaps. In any case, everyone with bags or purses had to pass them by a security guard who poked around inside each one.

Well, just as she came up to the guy and presented her purse to be inspected, Martha realized she had brought her .38 revolver along in the purse. The guard opened the purse and began to poke around inside. Martha held her breath. What would happen if they discovered the gun? Could she talk her way out of this?

But she was a young woman with two young boys trailing along with her,

clearly her own. Obviously no threat.

Yet, there was that revolver sitting in the purse.

Then there was a commotion behind her in line. Someone asked the guard a question, quite loud. The guy hesitated a moment, then closed Martha's purse and passed it back to her. He motioned for us to go on in while he dealt with whatever was going on behind us in line.

And that is how my mother came to carry a .38 revolver with her throughout a tour of the Nixon White House in May of 1972.

We went on several family vacations to the western United States throughout the 1970s. The biggest one was when we spent July of 1974 traveling. My father and mother had been camping many times before. They had a canvas cabin tent that they used to go to the Smokies.

In fact, one morning while camping at the Smokies, Martha was inside that cabin tent taking out her curlers and putting on makeup. She had a small makeup mirror on a little table, and, as she looked into it to apply something, she saw a bear looking back at her. It was in the entrance of the tent, poking its head in. She turned around and looked at the bear, and the bear looked at her. She told it to go away. After a moment, away it went.

So they were already well acquainted with camping when they decided to make their epic Western quests. The first time we went on vacation, my father borrowed a white Ford van from Daniel Electric. He brought it back to Tuscaloosa from Anniston, and he and my mother proceeded to cover it with hippie flower stickers they got from who-knows-where. Jerry returned the van later to my grandfather with these stickers on it, and my grandfather nearly blew a gasket when he saw it. Anyway, we drove through the American West for three weeks in that white, pop-art-flower-covered van. We visited spots like the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest in Arizona, and we went out to California and saw Sequoia trees there.

The biggest Out West trip we took was in 1977. We brought along Mama Cooley, Electa Barron Cooley, and she saw all of the Southwest for the first

time. On that trip we did an extended stay at the Grand Canyon for several days. That was also the trip when we went to Yellowstone National Park. There are pictures of me and David by Old Faithful from that visit. My mother kept David and me marshaled and fed, ready to see things. What she liked greatly was seeing the Indians selling their wares on the square in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Martha always liked silver and turquoise jewelry, and she bought several items there that she wore for many years afterward. Her favorite landscape of all was Arizona's Painted Desert.

It was a great childhood, going on these vacations with my parents. My mother usually dressed in a cute, casual outfit of some sort, often a bandanna around her head. She was very much a creature of fashion in her younger years. She kept me and my brother snappily dressed as well. She had a good eye for clothing.

On that trip with my great-grandmother out West, I think we went all the way to Los Angeles, and up to Yosemite. That was the first time Martha had ever seen the Pacific Ocean. She didn't know that it wasn't the same temperature as the Atlantic or the Gulf of Mexico. She took David and me down to the beach, and we ran in—and immediately jumped back out, screaming. The water was freezing cold. But, as she always did at the Gulf Coast, she found a spot between the dunes and sunbathed for a while.

Martha cherished the beach above all places. She liked to lie in the sun and get tanned. She loved to go into the water and have a swim every now and then. As I said, she was a good swimmer.

Martha has green to blue colored eyes. She was about five foot six. Although she was completely blonde when she was younger, she was not fair-skinned. She inherited from Coker Montgomery the capacity to quickly take on a deep tan.

Martha had been devoted to Jerry since their marriage. She realized that the real problem they faced in the 1970s was that she had allowed him to return to Anniston, where Jerry was deeply unhappy working for his parents. With her urging, he sent out samples of his work from his days at the Geological

Survey. It was excellent material, of course.

During my senior year in high school in early 1982, he got a job at Hunt Oil Company as a cartographer for the international development division and they moved to Dallas, Texas.

My mother had no trouble finding work in banking, which she eventually parlayed into a job in mortgage financing. They were far happier than they ever had been in Anniston. I believe perhaps they were happiest in Tuscaloosa when they were starting out, but Dallas was a close second. My mother was far less content than my father, though, because she was separated from her mother and grandmother, which was an intense connection that she never broke away from.

After they retired, I brought Martha and Jerry to live with me, my wife Rika, and my daughter and son in December of 2014. She had become quite sick with peritonitis and sepsis, and we expected her to die. But, lo and behold, after an extended stay in the hospital, she started breathing on her own. During Martha's recovery, her sister, Janice Montgomery England, came to live with us for a time as a caregiver for Martha and Jerry. But within a few months, the geriatric doctor we'd found for Martha and Jerry also examined Janice and discovered that she had advanced cancer. Janice decided to move back to Birmingham to end her days. Her cousin Betty—Electa's sister Mae's daughter—took her in. Janice died May 7, 2015.

After the passing of Jerry, Martha spent a great deal of time tending to my dog, reading, and gazing out the window at the trees in my backyard, where she watched the squirrels and birds that cavort there. She went on walks in the neighborhood and seemed content.

I think the core of Martha Montgomery Daniel's personality was always her tiger-like devotion and advocacy for those she loved. This started with my great-grandmother, who was in many ways like a mother to her. She was fiercely loyal to Electa, and it was she who insisted Electa accompany the

family on our longest and greatest Southwestern vacation. She literally pulled up stakes and moved back to Alabama to care of Electa in her final days. She was also devoted to Louise, but, at that point, Janice was available for help. Yet she made many trips from Texas to Alabama and back in Louise's final decade, usually driving the eleven hours it took.

Most of all, Martha was ferociously devoted to her children. She found the best schools she could for David and me. She pushed our teachers to pay special attention to us. She delivered us to innumerable music lessons, sports practices, youth group meetings, and Scout trips. She was there when we were sick, taking care of us. She was there at the doctor and the dentist and occasional hospital visit as we made our way through childhood.

Martha taught us to swim. Although I took lessons at the YMCA, it was really swimming with my mother at the University of Alabama Faculty Pool where I really learned to do it. She used to move off from the side and have me swim to her in the four-foot deep water (over my head at the time), always catching me just before I went under. I remember my true terror at going under, drowning. But I knew she would save me, if it came to that. I had not the slightest doubt I could count on her. I got farther and farther out, until one day—I could do it. I remember the smell of the chlorinated water, the flash of the sunlight. And I recall how she caught me up and hugged me in the water after I made it there and back, there and back, to her.

Most importantly, Martha saw to the mental, emotional, and spiritual development of my brother and me. She was not content with just any church, but sought out one with beliefs she could respect. She read to us constantly when we were young, and never once complained about all the reading I did (to distraction) as I got older. She liked the popular music of the day, and played it on the car radio constantly. She dragged David and me through innumerable museums, took us to plays and performances, and traveled with us to see wondrous sights. She was a wonderful, inspired mother in all respects. That was, perhaps, the role Martha was born to play, and she was brilliant in it.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Olive Cemetery

3191 Mt. Olive Road
Mt. Olive, AL 35117

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAY 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mt. Olive Cemetery
3191 Mt. Olive Road
Mt. Olive, AL 35117