



## Betty Sutherland

October 15, 1930 - June 23, 2024

Betty Sutherland was born to Jess and Rena Thompson in Maysville, Oklahoma. She was one of five siblings; two brothers, Roy and Novis, and two sisters, Neta Jayne and Winona. Betty was the last of the siblings to be called home to God. After graduating high school, she married Kenneth Cronian and left Oklahoma for California. Betty started her career by working as secretary to the Commander of Naval Security in Point Magoo, California. Betty and Kenneth transferred to Munich Germany where their daughter, Cathy, was born in 1953. The family moved to San Antonio TX in 1955 where Betty worked at BAMC at Fort Sam Houston. She was the executive assistant to Colonel Hewlett, who was Chief of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery. Colonel Hewlett and Dr. Denton Cooley performed the first open heart surgery in San Antonio. Betty shared that “the most interesting and unusual job she had in her entire career” was working as the personal assistant to Dr. Hubertus Strughold. He was brought from Germany to work at Brooks Air Force Base and was a pioneer of space medicine.

After Betty and Kenneth divorced, she and daughter Cathy stayed in San Antonio where she met her future husband, Dr. Berry Sutherland. Their daughter, Dianne, was born in 1963 and the family moved to Houston, where Berry finished his Doctorate in Geology at the University of Houston. He became a college professor and they lived in Gainesville, Florida and Dallas, TX. He was offered a contract at a brand-new campus, the University of Texas

San Antonio. He was one of the first professors hired at UTSA and the family moved to Boerne, TX. Betty served a term on the Boerne ISD school board and was able to hand her daughter, Dianne, her high school diploma. It was at this time she started her career in politics by working for John Hill's gubernatorial campaign. She worked on Congressman Chick Kazen's re-election campaign. When the campaign ended, she joined his congressional staff in the San Antonio Federal Office. Betty went on to manage several political campaigns, including Orlando Garcia's campaign for the 4th Court of Appeals, Sandee Marion's campaign for Probate Court, and Northside ISD District Bond campaign.

Betty began working for mayors of San Antonio with Howard Peak's mayoral campaign. She was most proud of his work on getting the linear park system in San Antonio that future generations will enjoy. In 2005 she worked on Phil Hardberger's campaign for mayor and remained with him for his first term. Betty retired, but it didn't last long. She returned to work for Phil Hardberger in 2010 to help complete Phil Hardberger Park. This is one of her proudest achievements. She continued her work for the park through the Phil Harberger Park Conservancy to support the creation a beautiful green space, with an innovative land bridge and gardening programs for San Antonio youth. She has a building named for her at the park called "Betty's House". Betty was a lifelong gardener and Master Naturalist and her friends always enjoyed receiving her summer crop of tomatoes. Betty thought her career in politics was over until Ron Nirenberg asked for her help in running his mayoral campaign. She continued working for him until she retired at the age of 92, a feat not many have achieved.

Her great love, other than helping make San Antonio a better place to live, was UTSA Athletics. She and her husband, Berry, helped start the basketball program at UTSA. She was a high school basketball player and was always at UTSA games supporting her team. When her husband passed away, she

created the Berry Sutherland Endowed Scholarship in Athletics. She was thrilled when UTSA started a football program. She bought season tickets and her last years were filled with cheering for the Roadrunners. She loved Coach Jeff Traylor and helped support him when he came to San Antonio just like she did with “her mayors”. Betty and her husband Berry loved to travel. They took annual trips to Colorado as well as trips to Hawaii, China, and Italy. Betty’s last trip was to South Africa at age 88 with her daughter Dianne. She also loved to quilt and many people will remember her through the beautiful quilts she gifted them.

Betty Sutherland passed away peacefully in her home on June 23, 2024, surrounded by her daughters, Cathy Davies and Dianne Sutherland. She is survived by many loving nieces and nephews, as well as lifelong friends. The First Baptist Church of San Antonio was Betty’s spiritual home. The family requests that any donations made in her honor go to the Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy.

# Cemetery Details

## Mission Burial Park South

1700 SE Military Dr.  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
<http://www.missionparks.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**JUN 27.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of San Antonio  
515 McCullough Ave  
San Antonio, TX 78215  
<http://www.fbcса.org/>

## Funeral Service

**JUN 27.** 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of San Antonio  
515 McCullough Ave  
San Antonio, TX 78215  
<http://www.fbcса.org/>

# Tribute Wall



“ Margie P. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Betty Sutherland.

Margie P. - June 25, 2024 at 05:40 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Betty Sutherland.



June 25, 2024 at 04:19 PM



“ Randy Hollon & Paula Winslow planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Betty Sutherland.

Randy Hollon & Paula Winslow - June 25, 2024 at 04:19 PM