

My name is Sam Redd Carter.

It is my privilege to say I am the son of Sam and Madge Carter.

The story of Madge Carter's life starts in Bowling Green, Va., in 1923. She was the sister of three rambunctious brothers, Peter, Tommy & Bucky.

They grew up in a small town shadowed by the Great Depression in 1929.

That hardship must have instilled some grit and energy in each one of them.

Madge balanced full-time jobs with classes to pursue an education that culminated in a Ph.D.

Madge and her husband Samuel Carter Jr. married in June 1951. They eventually settled in another small town, Ashland.

Sam and Madge reveled in their trip to Europe in the 1960s. The canals of Venice. The Eiffel Tower.

Every Easter Sunday they attended the sunrise service

together.

And in 1966 at age 43, Madge gave birth to a son. Sam and Madge gave me the best of upbringings.

Madge's love enveloped her wonderful husband through many years of illness. Daddy Sam passed in 1993. And Madge embarked on a widowhood that lasted nearly 30 years.

But Madge wasn't deterred.

Her story continued.

She spent her life devoted to children. Neighborhood children like Margaret, Caroline and Cece. And the seriously ill children she taught from their homes. For many of them, Madge was an angel of light.

In her prime, Madge's capacity for gift-giving was legendary.

Maybe you saw Madge at the Fourth of July Parade. Her red, white and blue attire. The fireworks sunglasses that flared over her eyes.

Or on the board of directors at Kiddie Kingdom.

Or dressed like a ballerina for Halloween.

Or busy here in the nursery at St. James.

After Madge retired from teaching almost 30 years ago, she was interviewed by her good friend, Erica Inge.

Here is an excerpt from that interview:

“One of Madge’s students died and the child’s mother had a hard time in dealing with the death. Madge stopped by the week after the child died to check in on the mother. The mother and funeral director were locked in a struggle with the mother not wanting to bury her daughter and the funeral director desperately wanting to put the child to rest. The funeral director enlisted Madge’s help. Madge stepped in and talked to the mother. The mother said she could do it if Madge went with her. Madge drove her to the cemetery.”

And another story.

“Madge was teaching a young boy when his mother’s estranged boyfriend appeared. The mother and boyfriend began arguing and a gun was brandished. Instead of racing out of the house to safety, Madge gathered up the child and calmly went to her car. They bravely continued their lesson until the police arrived. Madge laughed when she told the story.”

Madge cherished her family. The Bakers. The Swains. The Pollards. The Powells. The DeJarnettes. The Robertsons.

The Carters.

Michael Carter, our cousin from California, texted me one of his recollections:

“I will always remember waking up in the middle of the night to find your mom reading. We spent some time talking that night. I came from a home where no one really read much. I thought Aunt Madge was the smartest lady I had ever met.”

If we recounted all the happy stories about Madge Carter we'd probably be here forever.

But Madge's story doesn't end here. It doesn't end in a casket. It doesn't end in a cemetery.

In fact, we believe Madge's story is just beginning. In a more perfect world. There with Daddy Sam and her students who preceded her and many others

And the most eloquent eulogy about Dr. Madge Alden Swain Carter cannot be contained in words.

It's written in the hearts and minds of all the people she influenced for good.