

IN MEMORIAM:

Remembering a Legend: **BETTY BROWN**

The school lost a true Langley legend when former head of school, Betty Brown, passed away on February 23 at the age of 96. Over the course of her three decades at Langley, Betty's unwavering dedication to young learners and our school community made a significant and lasting impact that has helped shape the Langley of today. Although she retired more than 25 years ago, Betty remained a devoted friend of the school, attending numerous events on campus and staying in close contact with many Langley colleagues and families.

Betty first came to Langley in 1967 as a kindergarten teacher, and except for a short leave of absence to raise her children, served the school in many capacities until her retirement in June 1999. After 14 years as a teacher and administrator in roles including director of admissions, head of summer programs, and assistant head, she was appointed by the Board of Directors to become head of Langley, a position she held from 1981 to 1999.

During her 18 years as head, Betty shaped Langley into a professionally run, model school while respecting its cooperative roots during a time of great change. She raised funds for and opened three new buildings – including the current Lower School building that bears her name – and renovated or expanded several other spaces such as the Claire Maxted Administration Building. She ushered Langley through a period of significant growth, increasing student enrollment from 387 in 1981 to 450 at the time of her retirement in 1999, making Langley the largest independent elementary school in the state. Under her leadership,



"I have so many wonderful memories from my time at Langley, but my favorite memories always center around the children. It was so rewarding to see a child's confidence grow after accomplishing something difficult." -Betty Brown

the school also became recognized for the strength of its curriculum and its emphasis on building character.

"Langley's educational goal is not just to ensure that students are taught the basic knowledge that all well-educated students must grasp, but to focus on each student as a separate, thinking, creative individual who is respected as he or she is and challenged to be what each can become," Betty once said.

A night owl who routinely worked into the wee hours, she was known for her Southern charm, her personal touch (she loved hand-delivering birthday cards to each child), and her strong commitment to Langley's students (she always thoughtfully considered how her decisions would impact the students).

Betty's boundless energy and lifelong passion for advocating for children drew her to new leadership roles following her Langley retirement. She continued to share her expertise by serving as an interim head and trustee at several schools, a consultant for the National

Association of Independent Schools, and grandparents' coordinator at The Woods Academy for 14 years. But her heart always remained at Langley, and she enjoyed following the school's progress through the years.

"As I reflect back on my Langley career, one of the things that stands out clearly is that the school has changed tremendously and yet remains the same," Betty once remarked. "We have come a long way, but our basic tenets, our mission, has remained unchanged. This mission has been the strength and foundation from which we have soared." ■

We look forward to remembering Betty at a special memorial event on campus on **Saturday, September 6, 2025** (stay tuned for details). Contributions in memory of Betty may be made to Langley's Betty J. Brown Endowment for Faculty Development at www.langleyschool.org/giving/endowment or via mail to The Langley School, 1411 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101.

