



## Claire Elise Miley

July 2, 2004 - July 21, 2019

Claire Elise Miley

7/2/04-7/21/19

The bright, far-too-short life of Claire Elise Miley came to a sudden and heartbreaking end on Sunday afternoon, July 21, 2019.

The daughter and only child of Allison (Rash) and Robert P. Miley of Davidson, N.C., Claire was born in Charlotte on July 2, 2004. A rising high school freshman, Claire's life was filled with passions including a love of being in and on the water with friends, continuing until her last day when, as a passenger on a personal watercraft on Lake Norman, her life ended after being struck from behind by another watercraft. Claire recently completed a school presentation on living with "purpose" through marine life, sports and academics. To honor her intentions, those who love her most will now work to improve personal watercraft safety, so others may be spared this heartbreak. Claire attended Forsyth School in St Louis, and in the Charlotte area, Woodlawn School, Davidson Day School and Cannon School, earning academic honors. She thrived at Dance Davidson for nine years, coming home to show her parents new dance steps after every lesson and loving the adrenaline of performance days with flowers, family and celebrations. She then turned her focus to volleyball, where she played setter for her schools as well as the Lake Norman Volleyball Club Elite travel teams. Her "short floater" serve aced many an opponent, and she cherished a unique camaraderie with her teammates. Always the youngest on her dance and volleyball teams, her

competitive spirit drove her. It was visible in both her love of cheering for and attending sporting events for the UNC Tar Heels, where her parents, paternal grandfather and other family are alumni, and in her dislike for their rivals but deep love for family and friends who pulled for other shades of ACC blue and red.

As a young girl strapped in her car seat, Claire wanted the music up and the windows down, feeling the wind blow through her thick, curly hair, which became part of her signature style. Her younger years included travels across the U.S., Canada and Europe with her parents, and she loved the enchantment of frequent trips to Disney, where she danced with Cinderella and walked the plank holding hands with Captain Hook. She took in the rush of roller coasters with Dad, and relaxing spa and shopping days with Mom. She held dear annual family traditions of mountain lake visits, dice games, Easter egg hunts, peanut butter balls and the Conga Christmas party. Her first laugh was at her dogs, whom she always wanted by her side.

Claire was fortunate to grow up spending holidays and summers at Bald Head Island. She watched sea turtles nest and hatch, saw her first shooting stars and bioluminescent sand, took long walks on the beach, jumped and rode the waves, laughed and shared special moments with family, old friends and new; and relished a walk up the street to visit her favorite neighbors. The magic of the island gave her love, laughter and a place to fully live life.

Claire's greatest teenage joy was spending time with friends. She stayed up late on the phone, blasted music from her Bose speaker and loved to sing, dance and laugh with them as well as have an occasional cry. She loved tanning and being near the water on a sunny day, and curling up on the couch with a blanket and a movie on a rainy one. She lit candles morning and night and cultivated playlists of diverse music spanning multiple genres and decades. She was a unique blend of bright light and quiet shadow, playful mischief and melancholy. Known as an old soul, she stated her opinions with confidence and her friends looked to her for advice. Along with marine biology, her evolving career interest was psychology and therapy, with a deep passion

for social justice.

Claire was so very loved, and like the best things do, left us longing for more. Memories of her special spirit, ocean eyes, curly hair and brief but abundant story of her life will ride the waves of our hearts forever. It has been said “no one is actually dead until the ripples they cause in the world die away.” It is her family’s desire that her love, light and laughter continue to be spread across the world in her memory.

Claire is preceded in death by her grandfather, Ford Rash, a former Wilkes County Commissioner; and her first Labrador rescues Maggie and Jack. In addition to her parents, Claire is survived by her maternal grandmother Nellie Rash and friend Tom Ayers of Wilkesboro, and her paternal grandparents Shirley and J.J. (Tony) Miley of Southern Pines; aunts and uncles: Elaine and Steve Rash of Boone, Deborah and Gene Rash of Mt. Holly, Susan Miley of Babson Park, Florida and Joanie Miley of Charlotte. She is also survived by extended family including Brenda and Johnny Yelton of Charlotte and godsisters Berkley and Alex Brehm of High Point. She will be deeply missed by close family friends, volleyball teammates, classmates and her beloved rescue dog Stella.

A service to honor Claire was held on Aug. 10 at Davidson College, where hundreds of family and friends gathered to celebrate. Please consider sharing in her passions through a gift to the Bald Head Island Conservancy ([www.bhic.org/give](http://www.bhic.org/give)) or Big Fluffy Dogs Rescue ([www.bigfluffydogs.com/donate](http://www.bigfluffydogs.com/donate)) and denote ‘in memory of Claire Miley’ for either organization. Special thanks to the family, friends and community of the Mileys who are supporting them during this difficult journey. Their bond is ineffable.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

AUG 10. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Lilly Family Gallery in Chambers Building at Davidson College

# Tribute Wall



“ *Claire Elise Miley*

February 14, 2021 at 11:24 AM



“ *Claire Elise Miley*

February 14, 2021 at 11:04 AM



“ *Claire Elise Miley*

February 14, 2021 at 11:03 AM



“ *Sarah lit a candle in memory of Claire Elise Miley*



Sarah - January 10, 2020 at 06:45 PM



“ *Cj lit a candle in memory of Claire Elise Miley*



cj - October 10, 2019 at 07:19 PM

LM

“ Allison, Rob, Nellie and family,

*There are just no words to be found to tell you how deeply sad I am for all of you. I never had the opportunity to meet your sweet Claire, but I got to see her pictures and hear all about her from my Granny, Ina, who was so captivated by this young lady that shared the same birthday with her. She treasured each picture and card that she received and shared with all of her family and friends, no matter where she was. Nellie kept Granny updated on all of Claire's activities and achievements, and Granny proudly relayed them to us. Without a doubt, this was a most loved child by all who knew her and her light will continue to shine in your hearts and memories. What a wonderful gift she brought into this world. My prayers are with each of you to find comfort and strength as God wraps you in his arms until you see your beautiful girl again.*

*Linda Earp McClure*

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**Linda Earp McClure** - September 25, 2019 at 10:57 AM

AM

*Thank you, Linda. Beautiful. — Allison*

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**allison miley** - November 19, 2019 at 11:57 AM



“ *I remember the first time I held her at the hospital. It was love at first sight.*

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**Elaine Rash** - September 08, 2019 at 09:00 PM