



# Marjorie "Midge" Brittingham

JUN 30, 1938 - DEC 31, 2019



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## Marjorie "Midge" Brittingham

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### M arjorie Brittingham Obituary

Marjorie "Midge" Brittingham (nee Wood), 81, of Oberlin, Ohio, passed away in her home New Years Eve December 31, 2019 in the company of her husband, Smith R. Brittingham III, her brother, Reverend William James Wood and his wife, Susan Pettingill Wood, and friends from near and afar. Midge was born June 30, 1938 in Tallman, a Hamlet in the Town of Ramapo, NY. She grew up in northern New Jersey and attended Oberlin College, graduating in 1960 with honors and marrying her classmate Smith R. Brittingham on commencement weekend. They left Oberlin for some years but returned in 1969, by then with their two children, Smith R. Brittingham IV and William Alfred Brittingham, and never left again. Midge embraced the principles of the Women's Liberation Movement and found opportunities to move from full-time mother at home to most-days at an office, supported by the wonderful qualities of small-town Oberlin which made parenting and working come together for mothers as well as fathers. She served as Associate in Lay Ministry at Christ Episcopal Church in those years when the issues of whether women could be priests arose, and fought, with the Reverend Peter Beebe, ultimately to win that fight. The struggle, though, led her to become, at first, the Assistant Alumni Director at Oberlin College, and shortly thereafter, the Alumni Director itself, and she served in that position for 28 years until her retirement in 2004. During those times she initiated the Alumni Council, developed the Oberlin Alumni Tours program (leading tours to 65 countries during her tenure), created programs to bring Oberlin alumni back to Oberlin to mentor current students, and helped the alumni community recognize, accept and support the differing needs and views of its members, whether people of color, LGBTQ, or other identities or interests. Not surprisingly, when she was nearing retirement, an article in the Oberlin Alumni Magazine about her years of service was headlined "Mother Midge" In retirement



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she and her husband instituted what became known as Sunday Dinners at the Brittinghams, a weekly event which continued throughout the years of her retirement, bringing students from all over the world to enjoy dinners together in an American home as a temporary break from study for tests and papers or practice in the conservatory. Midge is survived by her husband, Smith III; children, Smith Brittingham IV (and his wife, Brenda Huneycutt) and William "Billy" Brittingham (and his wife Lyn Freundlich); grandchildren, Rusty, Natalie, Jordan and Graham; younger brother Bill Wood; and some 40,000 or so Oberlin alumni. She was preceded in death by her parents, Al and Flora Wood, and an older brother, Rick Wood. There will be a memorial service in Oberlin at a time, date, and place yet to be determined. In lieu of flowers, etc., if you wish to make a gift in remembrance of Midge's life and service, please make your gift to the Marjorie Wood Brittingham '60 Alumni in Service to Oberlin College (ASOC) Fund, established in 2003 by friends and colleagues of Midge to honor her years of service to her alma mater. The fund assists academic departments, programs, and student groups in bringing alumni back to campus to lecture and meet with current students and other community members. Donations can be made online at <https://advance.oberlin.edu/donate> (Please select OTHER and type in Marjorie Wood Brittingham '60 Alumni in Service to Oberlin College (ASOC) Fund) or, alternatively, mail your check made payable to Oberlin College to: Office of Advancement, Oberlin College, 50 West Lorain Street, Oberlin, Ohio 44074-1089. Please write Marjorie Brittingham in the memo.) Donations can also be made in Midge's name to Christ Episcopal Church, 162 S. Main St., Oberlin, OH 44074.

To send flowers  
to the family or plant a tree  
in memory of Marjorie "Midge" Brittingham, please visit our floral store.

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