



# THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

1 WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

*Distinguished Citizens biography for:*

## **Frances Jane Axline**

b. 1927

*Honored as a Distinguished Citizen in 2025*

Hobos hitchhiking on the trains in the 1950's and '60's likely had the following to say as they were approaching Brunswick: "If you're hungry, there's a lady on Walnut Street, right beside the tracks, where you can get a cheese sandwich and glass of sweet tea." Frances Axline's reputation undoubtedly spread among the dogs and cats in the area as well. No one was turned away.

Frances Jane Ayers was born on July 19, 1927, in a house close to Himes Store in Weverton, Maryland, but she grew up in Halltown where her stepfather worked in the paper mill. She was the second of five children and attended elementary and high school in Harpers Ferry.

Frances met her husband-to-be at the Rainbow Club where Patsy Cline once performed (on Rt. 340 near Berryville, VA, recently razed). Meredith Leslie Axline was a farm boy from near Lovettsville who had recently returned from serving in the South Pacific during World War II. They were married one year later, on May 13, 1945.



Frances and Meredith initially rented an upstairs apartment on Brunswick Street. After a couple of years, they moved to the apartment building situated next to the Reformed German Church (now Beans in the Belfry) on West Potomac Street. She recalls watching the construction of the Potomac River bridge right next door in 1955. In 1956, the Axlines found a home on Walnut Street which they rented for 12 years, eventually purchasing it for \$4,000. There Frances has lived to the present time.

Frances spent the first 21 years of her marriage focused on raising her five children: Jerry, Patsy, Judy, Kent, and Lisa. She was deeply involved in her kids' school and never missed the chance to chaperone or attend their field trips! Based on their histories, she did a very good job of it. In 1966, Frances decided to get a job. Her first job was at the sewing factory on 5th Avenue.



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When that company moved its operations to Frederick, she found work with Eveready Corporation in Frederick, where her job was packing the cookware that was manufactured there. When Eveready moved to Ohio four years later, she became employed at the Hillside Motel (across from the former Cindy Dee Restaurant), where she “did everything.” Eleven years later, she retired at the age of 65.

Her husband, meantime, was employed as a chauffeur at Ft. Detrick (and later as a building maintenance worker at Dulles Airport) while working two other part-time jobs to support the family. He did this while dealing with recurrent relapses of malaria, which he contracted while in the military in the South Pacific during WWII. Meredith had to retire in 1971 when he had his first heart attack. He died in 1974.

Frances’ first civic involvement in the community came when her husband, a member of the local Moose Club, told her that they needed more members, so she joined. She remembers fondly attending weekly dances there and listening to such celebrities as Patsy Cline. Although the Brunswick Moose Club has since closed, she remains a life member of the Moose.

Her husband was also active in the Brunswick Eagles Club (Aerie #1136), serving at one time as MD/DC State President. When the Brunswick Auxiliary was formed in 1964, Frances was #2 on the list of charter members. She served as the first Madam Chaplain and, subsequently, two terms as Auxiliary President. Of the 73 charter members, she is the only one still living. At the recent 60th anniversary Auxiliary meeting, October 5, 2024, was proclaimed Frances Jane Axline day by the mayor and council, an honor she is incredibly proud of. Frances has high praises for the work the auxiliary does to raise funds to benefit community organizations and individuals in need.

Frances’s hobbies include gardening (especially flowers) and bird-watching. In the past, she has taken time to visit friends in Florida, and more recently she has enjoyed a trip to Hawaii and a cruise to the Bahamas. In addition to her five children, she has 7 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren, and 9 great-great grandchildren.

Prudent living has blessed Frances with good health. However, in February 2025, she fell and landed on her face, resulting in several fractured bones. Eventually, she had to be transferred to a rehab center in Frederick, where she was interviewed at the time of this writing. But one ought to anticipate she will soon be well enough to return home to take care of her flower garden, the local dogs and cats, and... perhaps... an occasional hobo passing through town.

*The Mayor and Council and the Brunswick History Commission are proud to honor Frances Axline as a Distinguished Citizen of Brunswick, Maryland.*