

# Jill Jackson Miller

Songwriter  
1913-1995

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by Barbara Magerl

From an early life filled with tragedy and doubts of self-worth, Jill Jackson Miller emerged as co-writer of a song about serenity acclaimed around the world. Born in Independence, Jill was three years old when her mother died and was legally adopted by age 12. When her family moved to Armour Boulevard, she was allowed to continue attending school at Northeast High School for emotional support. After two years at Kansas City Junior college and after-school work at KMBC Radio, she left for Hollywood.

Bit roles led to her starring in seven Western movies. When her first marriage ended, she sought 'peace' through an unsuccessful suicide attempt. Her recovery led to a new, deeply spiritual life. Jill married songwriter Seymour "Sy" Miller and in 1955 they wrote a song that brought unsuspected fame—"Let There Be Peace on Earth and Let It Begin With Me," an appeal for world peace beginning within each person. The song was printed in major songbooks and widely recorded by celebrities. It has been performed for Nikita Krushchev, many presidents, the Pope and countless religious services.

The Millers won many prestigious awards, including the Valley Forge Freedom Foundation's George Washington Medal and an award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Their "Peace Song" was used on two Hallmark cards and they wrote the theme song for People to People, the international friendship organization located in Kansas City.

"Peace has to begin in our own hearts," Jill Miller often said. She died in 1995, leaving a song about both personal and world peace.

## Sources

"A Lasting Peace." *The Kansas City Star*, 12 December 1988.

"Sharing the Spirit in Song." *Unity Magazine* April 1987.



Jill Jackson Miller, Directory of American Society of Composers, Arrangers, and Publishers (ASCAP), New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1980 Edition.

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