

# At last, Ann Miller's at peace with her lifelong heartache over baby

**YOUNG** Ann's sad loss remained with her through her later years (inset).



**I**N DEATH, legendary tap dancer Ann Miller was reunited with her only child — a baby girl named Mary — who died hours after birth nearly 60 years ago.

Hollywood stars such as Esther Williams, Kathryn Grayson, Margaret O'Brien, Jayne Meadows and Connie Stevens were among those who said goodbye to Ann during a moving funeral service at St. Mel's Catholic Church in Woodland Hills, Calif., on January 28.

They remembered her talent, her million-dollar legs, her laughter — and her lasting heartache over Mary, the little girl she loved and lost.

Before she died, Ann confided her secret torment to **THE ENQUIRER**, revealing how her first husband, steel heir Reese Milner, pushed her down the stairs of their home while she was eight months pregnant — critically injuring the baby. "My one and only child, my

baby Mary, died within a couple of hours of being born," the devastated actress confided. "Reese came from a very powerful family, and they managed to whisk away my baby. I never even got a good look at her. They buried her and never told me where."

Five years ago, a friend found out where Mary was laid to rest.

Last week — in accordance with Ann's wishes — Mary was exhumed, her tiny coffin was laid on top of Ann's, and the two were buried together, next to Ann's mother Clara.

"It was Ann's one huge, heart-breaking disappointment that she didn't have a daughter to shower her love on," Ann's close pal told **THE ENQUIRER**.

"Now, at last, Ann has her little Mary close to her heart for eternity."

Miller, 80, was born in Texas in 1923. By the time she was a teen, she was starring in "Stage Door" and "You Can't Take It With You."



**PALLBEARERS** carry Ann's casket. Below, June Haver (left), Anne Jeffreys and Connie Stevens were among the mourners.



Her legs were insured for \$1 million.

In 1979 she made a comeback on Broadway in "Sugar Babies."

Sadly, she was diagnosed with lung cancer last year. Shortly before she died, she called Monsignor Padraic Loftus, of St. Mel's Church, to her hospital room to baptize her.

Said Loftus, who officiated at the funeral: "Just after I left the room, Ann took her last breath — and danced through the pearly gates."

— **ROBIN MIZRAHI**