



Betty Smith Joyner

November 3, 1924 - July 20, 2021

Betty Smith Joyner, 96, beloved wife, Mama and Nana, exited this world on Tuesday, July 20, 2021, surrounded by her family's big bubble of love. Betty loved nature, woods walks, gardening, sunlight on autumn leaves, tea with toast and jam, a good book, poetry, quantum physics and, most of all, her family. A voracious reader and lifelong learner, her bright and curious mind continued to whir well into her 18-year journey with Lewy Body dementia, often with some humorous outpourings. Dementia, for a window of time, gave Betty a fresh ability to play and create spontaneous spoken poems. We all got to savor her newfound and joyful freedom of wholly unfiltered and often entertaining observations and speeches.

Born in Southport, Betty spent most of her youth in Wilmington, graduating from New Hanover High School before attending Wake Forest University where she met her beloved, John Thomas Joyner, III. They married and traveled west of NC for John's medical training but were ultimately lured to the beautiful Asheville mountains in 1958 where Betty raised their three daughters to love nature and learning. She was a talented teacher and writer and a longtime member of the First Congregational UCC.

Betty was predeceased by siblings, Malon and Ellen. Left to hold her memories are Betty's loving husband of 71 years, John T. Joyner, who cared for his wife with tender and undying devotion and commitment so that she

could stay at home even as her disease steadily whittled away her physical and mental capacities. Also remaining are Betty's three daughters, Rowanne Joyner (Claudia Flowers) of Charlotte, Cathy Joyner (Bill Stahl) of Asheville and Susan Joyner (Bryan Peters) of Raleigh; grandchildren, Jeni Gale (Russell) of Asheville, Amy Finkler (Josh) of Asheville, Dylan Stone (Molly) of Greensboro, Maclin Peters of San Diego, Campbell Peters of Brooklyn, NY and Sarah Hinson of Girdwood AK; great grandchildren, Fuller, Murray, Maren and Sally; sisters, Stella Brown of Greensboro and Amelia Strickland of Knightdale along with many cherished extended family members.

Keeping Betty at home as her dementia progressed took a loving and dedicated village. The family is so deeply grateful for the special care given to Betty over so many years. Meg Word-Sims, MD, with MemoryCare, provided much needed medical and emotional support. The family was so very fortunate to have a most special contingent of astonishingly angelic caregivers who became part of the family and who, each in their own unique ways, made Betty's last years at home ones filled with song, support, love and dignity.

If you wish to honor Betty's memory, donations to MemoryCare or to the Botanical Gardens at Asheville would be welcomed. The kind and loving gesture of reaching out with a card, a call, or, better yet, a visit, to anyone whom you may know who has (or has a loved one with) dementia or another chronic disease that might isolate them from community would also be a loving tribute and would mean more than you know!

Morris Funeral and Cremation Care is serving the family and condolences may be made to Morris funeral Home at www.morrisfamilycare.com. There will be a private family service.

Starlight kisses my fingers.

As I gaze at the sky,

the darkness is dispelled by moonlight
and now I walk into the forest
with beams of lunar light to guide me.

(Betty Joyner “dementia improv poem” 2012)

Tribute Wall



“ *Betty Smith Joyner*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *When I was 10 in 1958, my family moved from PA to Asheville. We attended the Congregational United Church of Christ where my mother Janet Hampton became good friends with Betty. Betty gifted my mom a book “Letters of the Scattered Brotherhood” which became a favorite of hers. In 1963 we moved away from Asheville but as a young adult my mother gave me a copy of that beloved book. I read a letter from it most everyday and always think of Betty Joyner with deep love and gratitude. Twelve years ago, my husband and I moved back to Asheville and live a block away from the church building that was once a haven for us all. Sending healing thoughts to your family as you grieve her loss.*

Carole Shoaf - July 25, 2021 at 11:44 AM



“ *She was the best sister anyone could ever have had! She taught me so much...from childhood on up! She will be greatly by me and multiple others! Thank you John and daughters for loving her so much giving her such good care! Love you all!*

Stella Brown - July 21, 2021 at 04:03 PM



“ *Sister, as I called her, was the best sister one could ever have! She has taught me so much in my lifetime! I loved her dearly and will miss greatly!!*

Stella Brown - July 21, 2021 at 12:50 PM