



## Joan Todd Robinette

December 4, 1929 - March 29, 2023

Joan Todd Robinette, “Nonie” to her family, passed away at home on Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at the age of 93. Joan was born in 1929, and other than a brief period spent as a new bride in New Rochelle, NY, she lived her entire life in the Philadelphia area. Her parents, Francis Phelps Todd and Katherine Cooper Todd, resided in Chestnut Hill and Wyncote, and Joan attended nearby Miquon and Abington Friends, followed by many wonderful years at the Germantown Friends School (Class of 1947).

Joan met her future husband, George, while working toward her B.A. at the University of Pennsylvania (Class of 1951) and both she and George were members of “The Penn Players,” forming friendships they would share for life. Joan was also a past president and an enthusiastic member of what was called, ‘the women’s fraternity,’ Kappa Kappa Gamma.

After George’s service in the Army and their short time in New Rochelle, Joan and George lived near her parents in Wyncote, PA, then moved to Villanova in 1957. Joan’s parents soon followed, purchasing an expansive property next door. All of the neighborhood children spent countless hours by their pond, exploring the woods, and sledding down the hills there in the winter.

In 1967, the family moved to Bryn Mawr, where Joan lived for the next 55 years. This special house became the gathering place for friends of all of the

Robinette children, and those many friends grew very fond of “Mrs. Robinette” over the years. She even became a true and lasting friend to some. Joan was revered for her tremendous patience, positivity, and support. She was always a concerned listener, even if she didn't always agree. “Hmmm, that’s something to think about,” was her ‘go-to line’ when she wanted to let you down easily!

While raising three young children, Joan found time to volunteer at St. Christopher’s Children’s Hospital, and was a member of The Women’s Committee. She also taught at The Episcopal Academy, The Gateway School, and The West Hill School. She dearly loved the students she taught throughout her long career.

Joan and her husband divorced in 1973, but remained very friendly until George’s passing in 2009. After her children graduated college and were busy with lives of their own, Joan challenged herself by enrolling in the Masters Program at Bryn Mawr College’s School of Social Work. Returning to serious studies in midlife proved to be a wonderful experience for her. She thrived in the academic environment, and formed life-long friendships among her much younger classmates. Joan was justifiably proud of the MSW degree she obtained in 1986, but not nearly as proud as her children were of her commitment to succeed. Post graduation, Joan worked at River Crest, a residential treatment center for children and adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and then as a counselor in The Bala Cynwyd schools. Her compassionate nature helped serve her young students well, and they brought her immense joy, in return.

Family and friends were the center of Joan’s world. She enjoyed planning parties and hosting family dinners and reunions at her home. She carried that hospitality to her beloved vacation destinations of Eagles Mere, PA and Wellfleet, MA. Joan loved to travel and visited Alaska, Europe, Africa, Russia,

and even participated in an archaeological 'dig' in India. Of all of her many trips, her favorite was visiting Turkey.

With her life's work, extensive travels, and keen memory, Joan was an amazing storyteller. She kept conversation lively and she had a great sense of humor, always enjoying a good joke or fractured tale. Joan held a commanding position at the head of the dining table, where she loved hearing her children and grandchildren share stories of their lives.

Joan loved art and classical music and attended Friday afternoon concerts of the Philadelphia Orchestra for decades. She also loved learning new words, and would write their definitions down in a notebook for many, many years. Two years ago, with the huge help of a former aide (Abby), Joan put together a booklet of this wonderful extensive collection of words and their definitions, and mailed it out to every member of her family. Language and learning were very important to her. Everyone knew they dare not recycle The Philadelphia Inquirer (daily) and The Sunday New York Times, until each Crossword Puzzle had been completed!

Joan was a member of The Acorn Club and "The Tea Leaves" for many years, and she remained a member of The Merion Cricket Club until her passing. She had a philanthropic spirit and contributed to many organizations she was passionate about: The Philadelphia Art Museum, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The University of Pennsylvania, Germantown Friends School, The Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, National Public Radio, The SPCA, and so many others.

Joan is survived by her three children: Todd Robinette ( Sally), Ted Robinette ( Sharm), and Amanda Pendleton ( Pen), as well as her grandchildren: Christopher (Molly), Tyler, and Mallory Pendleton (Laura); Leigh Robinette; and Nicolas (Gem), Chloe Sargeant (Francis), and Carson Robinette. Joan

was also the delighted great grandmother of three: Jackson and Madeline Pendleton, and Autumn Robinette. She also leaves behind a number of dear friends, of all ages.

Joan achieved her goal of staying in her own home thanks to the extraordinary devotion of her daughter, Amanda, and the wonderful aides who were with Joan until the end. It is impossible to adequately express our family's gratitude to these devoted caregivers, Ghania, Sheelah, and Sheila, for the love and loving care they gave our mother these past years. They are true members of our family.

There was only one Joan "Nonie" Robinette, and she will be forever missed. One beloved friend wrote, "She embodied many qualities: tolerance, compassion, humor, and an ability to see the subtleties of life and people." As we carry on, we will aspire to embody those same qualities.

A Memorial Service for Joan will be held on Friday, April 28th, 1:00 PM, at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.

In lieu of flowers, friends are encouraged to donate in memory of Joan to a charity of their choice.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

APR **28**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church  
625 Montgomery Avenue  
Bryn Mawr, PA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Todd, Ted, and Amanda, I ran across your Mother's obituary while searching the internet for information on our Great Uncle Edward Robinette. I am so very sorry to find your sweet Mother is gone. I was very young when I met her, but I remember her being beautiful and kind. You have my deepest condolences. Please reach out to me if you would like to revisit some of our childhood memories. Your cousin, Julia Brodton. jsampson59@gmail.com*

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**Julie Sampson** - January 27, 2025 at 11:49 PM