



## Martha C. Wintner

September 25, 1937 - July 9, 2025

Martha Wintner, 1937-2025

Martha Hollis Calhoun Wintner was born in Boston, Massachusetts to the somewhat unlikely but wonderful union of Helen Fordham Webster and Dr. John Alfred Calhoun — a meeting of North and South.

Martha was the oldest of four close siblings. She and her brother Jack and her two sisters Helen and Deane grew up together in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, where their big home at 214 Elm Avenue became a center of neighborhood friendship, laughter, and antics.

While Martha was on the one hand a traditional straight A student and model oldest daughter, she made two rather remarkable choices after high school. The first was to attend Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota — sight unseen — arriving via overnight train. There, she majored in English and made great friends whom she cherished and corresponded with for the rest of her life. The second inspired choice was to accept a Fulbright Scholarship for the year 1959-1960 in Berlin — a city full of change, hope, and controversy, just before the Berlin Wall altered Europe and the world. Again, Martha left with lifelong friends and a broad worldview that allowed her to understand

people and situations with rare empathy throughout her 87 years.

The mid-'60s brought Martha to New Haven, Connecticut for her Masters in German at Yale. Apartment roommates — who of course became close friends — eventually led Martha to attend a party on a nearby street, and there she met Claude Wintner. After two years of courting and contemplation, she knew for sure that Claude was the perfect match for her. He was: an only child in a family of immigrants to complement Martha's four siblings and 24 first cousins; a lover of mountains and the wilderness to complement Martha's love of the beach and the ocean; and a man of chemistry with deep respect for the scientific method to complement Martha's love of literature and her deep, abiding faith.

Martha found her faith at an early age, during an Episcopal youth retreat. Thereafter, in a very quiet certainty, she went about her life with grace, forgiveness, and thankfulness for everything, everyone, and every day of the life that she was given.

Countless prayers of Martha's were answered over the years, and one of those was to have a family of love and openness that mirrored her own upbringing. Moving to Haverford College in 1968 where Claude began teaching chemistry, Martha spent the majority of her working life on that idyllic campus, raising her boys Edward and Thomas on Duck Pond Lane and later in their old stone colonial at 25 Railroad Ave.

While at Haverford, Martha taught English and German, served in the Dean's Office, and helped waves of first-year and (often) first-generation students

acclimate to the rigors of college writing — indeed, she pioneered the writing program at Haverford that to this day continues to broaden life at the college. For over forty years, Martha and Claude were fixtures on Haverford's campus, enjoying and sharing their lives with students, faculty, and staff alike. This culminated in their home becoming the obvious choice for the Holiday Singalong when the previous host passed forward the lyric sheets for that legendary campus gathering. Every December thereafter, 25 Railroad Ave was filled with a joyful cacophony of singing parents and children, plus piano, violin, trumpet, flute and any other musical talents that showed up at the door. These joyful events, still remembered by many, mirrored Martha's own parents' tradition of opening their house to all.

The exception to Martha and Claude's busy life on campus was their cottage in Tamworth, New Hampshire, where they retreated with their children for two months each summer, trading lectures for hikes in the White Mountains and exchanging grading for gardening in Martha's beloved herb garden. Here Martha made a whole new set of friends, sharing among other things her family's old Maine recipe for "Bud's Blueberry Cake."

Once her sons were off to college, Martha's activities expanded beyond Haverford's campus to include increased roles at her beloved Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, particularly in service to those in need. Martha and Claude also dedicated themselves to tending and enhancing their beautiful home garden and, further afield, began a series of worldwide travels that would encompass every continent save Antarctica. Martha and Claude loved the detailed planning of these adventures almost as much as the travels themselves, and invariably their trips included multiple visits to friends, new and old.

When Claude was diagnosed with cancer in 2014, Martha took up her new role as caregiver in whatever form was required. Everyone, including Claude, knew that his life thereafter — ten wonderful if challenging years when he had initially been given only three months to live — was in large part due to Martha's love, patience, and prayers. Among the blessings of this extra time, Martha and Claude got to see their four grandchildren — Anya, Sasha, Virgil, and Emily Anne — each come into their own as young, caring adults.

Claude passed in the spring of 2023, beginning Martha's final chapter: two incredible years as a resident of The Quadrangle senior living complex in Haverford. This chapter was filled with the same friendship, caring, and outreach that made Martha such a joy to include in any gathering: her book group, the informal widows' club, the Quadrangle Roundelay singers, gardening sessions, dinners at the dining hall and "Grill," or just a walk around the pond. Those who knew Martha knew they had the ear and the heart of a friend, a rare soul who could truly listen and understand.

Martha was both the genesis and the glue of so many gatherings over her lifetime: social, academic, literary, musical, faith-based, and family. This last, family, was her touchstone. Martha's love for her sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren was unbounded — in person, on the phone, and through the mail. Add to this long phone calls with her three beloved siblings Jack, Helen, and Deane — hallowed time she set aside throughout her life which later became the "Saturday sibs call" via Zoom. And finally, there was never any doubt that for Thanksgiving Martha would either host or attend whatever family reunion was being planned. The goodwill, laughter, and spirit of joy from those extended gatherings continues to ripple across time and across

generations.

Martha Wintner passed on July 9, 2025, sitting peacefully at home in her apartment chair. She had just composed and sent an email, which, very fittingly, was a happy birthday letter written in German to Claude's first cousin. Because she had an innate sense of what was important to those she met, Martha almost never missed a birthday.

Martha always made the time to follow up good intentions with words and acts of love.

Martha is survived by her two sons and their families, Ed, Jen, Anya and Sasha Wintner of Hudson, MA and Tom, Suzanne, Virgil, and Emily Anne Wintner of Cambridge, MA. She is also survived by her siblings and their families, Jack and Ottilia Calhoun, Helen Jaeger, Deane and Dick Bunce, and many loving cousins, nieces, and nephews of all generations.

A public Memorial Service for Martha will be held at the Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, PA at 11:00 AM on Saturday, October 11. All who knew Martha are welcome to the service and to join in the reception that will follow in the Parish House.

In Lieu of Flowers, the Family suggests that donations be made to either of two charities which Martha loved:

A Better Chance, Lower Merion

P.O. Box 213

Ardmore, PA 19003

The Chocorua Lake Conservancy

P.O. Box 105

Chocorua, NH 03817

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of The Redeemer  
230 Pennswood Road  
Bryn Mawr, PA

# Tribute Wall

FR

“ I have so many memories of visits on the porch in Tamworth with Martha and Claude. They were such special times. After my Bill passed they graciously invited me to dinner each summer and later I visited with Martha in the new house by the river, The obituary is a beautiful tribute to a wonderful woman and a dear friend. I last spoke to her when she was in Hospice. I know her family is grieving and they were the most important thing in her life.  
Prayers and love, particularly to Ed and Tom.  
Frannie Rich

---

**Frannie Rich** - September 17, 2025 at 03:28 PM

EW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



---

**Ed Wintner** - August 08, 2025 at 09:28 AM

EW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



---

**Ed Wintner** - August 04, 2025 at 12:20 PM

EW

“ 8 files added to the album Martha Family Photos



---

**Ed Wintner** - July 23, 2025 at 09:30 PM