



Barbara "Barb" Murphy Bolton

April 4, 1929 - May 26, 2026

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sunshine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Barbara "Barb" Murphy Bolton, 97, of Sarasota, Florida, was born into a proud Irish family on April 4, 1929, in Morgantown, West Virginia. She was raised in Morgantown and attended college there before spending much of her adult life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Southfield, Michigan, eventually retiring to Florida in 1990. She spent many years as a public-school teacher and was always motivating and encouraging her students. She was one of three children — Tom (deceased), Sissy, and Barb. Her father, Thomas, passed away suddenly when she was 14, after which her mother, Clotilde, took over running the family construction firm before selling the company some years later.

Barb was happily married for 63 years to Jack Bolton (deceased 2014), and together they raised four wonderful children: John, Sue (Rex), Dave (Renee), and Ann. She was also the proud grandmother of six — Brett, Scott, Jessica, Emily, Eric, and Andrew — and a beloved aunt to 10 nieces and nephews.

Barb lived life fully, with great joy and a spirit of adventure. She had a gift for bringing people together and left a lasting impression on everyone she met.

No one was ever a stranger. She was an enthusiastic card player. Poker, bridge, and bingo were among her favorites, and she preferred playing for money. She also enjoyed doing puzzles of all kinds. An avid golfer, she achieved four holes-in-one, a remarkable feat she rarely brought up herself. She also enjoyed swimming and worked as a lifeguard. She was a devoted wife, a deeply involved mother and grandmother, and a treasured friend to many. She always made time to listen and to help, and many of her activities were dedicated to friends and those in need.

One of her favorite sayings was, "Count your blessings, not your problems." She once told one of her granddaughters that she had lived a wonderful life — that she felt truly blessed and fortunate to have done everything she ever wanted to do.

Her creative spirit shone in everything she did. She loved decorating her walker and her front door and table for every season and holiday. She was well known for her jewelry making, painting, and pressed flower arrangements, and she always had a new project in the works. At 94 years old, she held a one-woman art show, selling her own artistic creations. Her zest for life was contagious, and she was a joy to be around.

Her kindness, warm smile, the twinkle in her eyes, and her caring nature will be deeply and dearly missed.