



Joan Shelton

March 17, 1936 - April 7, 2019

Joan Shelton died at home on April 7, 2019. She was 83 years old. She was born on March 17, 1936, St. Patrick's Day, in Wilmington, Delaware.

Christened Margaret Joan Stephens, Joan was the second of four children. She graduated from St. Elizabeth's High School in Wilmington, where she was a competitive swimmer, before going to the University of Delaware. There Joan studied elementary education and was president of the synchronized swim team club, nominated for homecoming queen, was a local beauty queen and a little sister of Theta Chi. She also met her future husband, Jim Shelton. She left college before graduation in order to marry and accompany Jim, a young Army officer, to his first duty station, Ft. Benning, Georgia in October, 1957.

It was the beginning of a great adventure which included at least 15 moves during their Army career alone including Ft. Bragg, North Carolina; Ft. Knox, Kentucky; Berlin, Germany; Ft. Ord, California; Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia; the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; European Command Headquarters, Stuttgart, Germany; Ft. Stewart, Georgia; Ft. Lewis, Washington; and assignments in Washington, D.C. and the Pentagon. Joan loved the adventure of living in new cities and countries and experiencing different cultures.

Joan and Jim went on to have eight children together, five daughters and

three sons. Joan was his constant support as Jim made his way through the Army ranks. In addition to raising their children, she volunteered with the American Red Cross, at school and chapel events, and hosted myriad social events with grace and ease. She was an excellent military officer's wife, offering comfort, guidance, and acceptance to other military spouses, including her daughters- and granddaughters-in-law. She never wore her husband's rank.

Joan modeled a high degree of resilience for her entire family. In 1976, Jim wrote that Joan was "...very independent in personal attitudes; not influenced greatly by me," and possessed, "inner strength and toughness greater than mine."

When Jim retired from the Army in 1983 the couple moved to Sparta, New Jersey. Joan began working for the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce and eventually attended Sussex County Community College where she made the Dean's List and earned the qualifications for her paralegal certificate. In 1997, the Sheltons moved to Florida, living first at The Sanctuary in Englewood before moving to Aston Gardens in Venice in 2014. Jim later moved to Windsor of Venice, while Joan moved in with their daughter in North Port. Jim died in October 2018, two days shy of their 61st wedding anniversary.

Joan was an avid reader and encouraged reading in others. She especially loved mysteries. She loved watching birds and shared her enthusiasm with her children and grandchildren. She watched Jeopardy nightly and enjoyed working crossword puzzles and jigsaw puzzles. She was an excellent cook and loved having the whole family around telling stories and laughing. Joan will be remembered as an excellent listener and confidant; for her practical advice and wisdom; and her encouragement of all who knew and loved her to pursue their own dreams.

She is survived, by her eight children, 14 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren; her brother and one sister; many nieces and nephews; and countless friends she made along the way. Joan, Mom, Grandma, Grossegrandma, Aunt Joan was loved, respected and honored. And she will be greatly missed. Joan will be laid to rest with her husband Jim at Arlington National Cemetery in July. Donations in her memory can be made to the Harry Chapin Food Bank and Tidewell Hospice.