



Mary Elizabeth "Betty" (nee Brown) Tilton

February 2, 1944 - July 30, 2023

In Loving Memory of MARY ELIZABETH "Betty" (nee BROWN) TILTON

February 2nd, 1944 – July 30th, 2023

Betty passed away comfortably with family by her side July 30, 2023, in Sarasota, Florida. Predeceased by her Mom and Dad, Viola Mae (Vicki) Brown and William H. (Bill) Brown and sister Teri Brown. Survived by brother John P. (Jan) Brown and Carol Brewer (Richard Brewer-deceased). Extremely loving mother of Pam (Jimmy Linn) and Dawn Tilton. Betty had numerous in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews she stayed in contact with as long as she could. She loved all of her relatives individually and they loved her right back ... always with more love to give, Betty and Lucky her most recent kitten who bonded in love as well. Betty grew up in Central Illinois, a farm girl born on February 2nd, 1944. Very active in 4H, school activities including Student Government, cheerleading, learning how to play bridge and of course farm chores.

Betty attended Southern Illinois University where she met the love of her life, John, to whom she was married for 59 years. John and Betty migrated to Dubuque, Iowa, after marrying in Decatur, Illinois. During this time Betty taught 6th grade and pre-school.

They eventually landed in Oak Park & River Forest, Illinois where they resided respectively in two Frank Lloyd Wright homes: The Beachy House and Ingalls House. Together, she and John founded in 1972 an architectural and interior design firm in Chicago. For over 30 years, she was Executive V.P. managing a staff of over 30 people. John was the artist, handling design and marketing endeavors, Betty did everything else, but not limited to, managing all the staff, legal, operational and financial aspects of the business.

Additionally, while living in Oak Park and River Forest, Betty became very active in various community activities. West Suburban Hospital Foundation Board. Also, what is now known as the Women Leaders in Philanthropy / Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation volunteering for over 7 years in numerous roles at both organizations, including Chairperson.

Betty and John ultimately spent all their summers in their beautiful Lake Michigan lighthouse inspired home designed by John in Fennville (between South Haven and Saugatuck, Michigan). Winters were in Longboat Key/Sarasota, Florida. Many of Betty and John's most cherished family times were at their Michigan and Florida waterfront homes with family and friends.

Betty was a pure type A personality who actively followed the Cubs (not the White Sox) and the Golden State Warriors. She was an extremely competitive bridge player often teaming up with many bridge partners throughout the years and would play as frequently 7 days a week. Her Bridge friends were a huge part of her life after retirement.

In 2008, Betty achieved the title of Silver Life Master with the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). Betty also was a very good tennis player and enjoyed the clay courts at the historic River Forest Tennis Club. She watched tennis often and especially loved being able to attend as many matches as possible while attending the Indian Wells Tennis Tournament.

She also loved to travel. Some memorable and favorite trips with dear friends included but not limited to: London, Paris, Barging through France, San Francisco and Hawaii. She was also a very engaged driver of cars, whether from the front seat, or the back.

She touched the hearts of many and was among the most memorable of people anyone could meet. If you knew Betty in her cooking days, she was one of the best cooks! Betty's Brisket and Baked Beans along with Betty's Potatoes, were just a few requested favorites. She always enjoyed the "Put Togethers" dinners with Michigan friends and neighbors. And if you played the right song, she would break out and dance and get everyone dancing.

Her family and friends will surely miss Betty but are comforted by so many wonderful memories. She attended church regularly whether it was in Illinois, Michigan or Florida.

Funeral arrangements and a Celebration of Life will be scheduled at a later date.

Please no flowers or donations. As Betty would say "take yourselves out to a great dinner instead".