



Betty Jean Schoos

APR 13, 1929 - JUN 20, 2017



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Betty Jean Schoos, and her beloved husband Herman Joseph Schoos, died within days of each other; Betty, born on April 14th, 1929, entered into eternal rest on June 20th, 2017, followed shortly by Joe, born on July 13th, 1926, who passed on June 22nd, 2017. They were preceded in death by Joe's brothers, Paul Leo and James, as well as by their son-in-law, Pascal Collins. They are survived by their three children: Suzanne Collins, of Norristown PA, Barbara Schoos (and her husband Scott Reichard) of Longbranch WA, and Daniel So-Schoos (and his husband Alistair So-Schoos) of Annapolis MD; by two grandchildren, Dominic Collins and Victor So-Schoos; as well as by Betty's sister, Barbara Scruggs (and her husband Donald Scruggs) of Claymont DE, and a number of cousins, nieces, and nephews. Betty and Joe both had been dealing with some significant health issues in recent years, but there had been no indication that the end was imminent. Suzanne, Dominic, Daniel, and Alistair, along with some family friends, were able to be at each of their bedsides in their final hours with us.

All that obituaries or eulogies can do is merely capture bits and pieces of a life, and at best leave some impression about who these people were and what significance their lives held. Not many are left who would be able, for example, to fill us in about their early years. Joe was born in Pittsburgh PA and spent his formative years between family visits back to Alleghany County and his eventual hometown of Norwood PA, just outside Philadelphia. He would relate how his mother, Josephine, a devout Catholic with a quick Irish temper, was the main disciplinarian for her three boys. Joe's father, whom he was named for, had been wounded in the trenches in the First World War, loved tending his rose garden and, late in life, doted on his grandchildren. Upon graduation from St. James Catholic High School for Boys, Joe enlisted in the Navy in 1944 as the Second World War raged. He served in the Pacific Theater, where his small LCI ship (LCI-G-728) launched rockets in support of various amphibious assault operations and endured a devastating typhoon that blasted the U.S. fleet at Okinawa in June of 1945. Joe would explain later that it was surviving this incident, with the crew struggling to save the vessel, his rosary beads wrapped



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around his wrist while he (as a Quartermaster) manned the helm during the storm, that forever sealed his faith in God and his special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. After the war, Joe continued his education, graduating from Villanova University.

Betty was born in Pennsauken NJ and moved several times in the north Jersey and New York City areas as her father, Robert Brandt, took various jobs (including with Thomas Edison and the IRT subway), before the family settled in Norwood PA near Robert's final employer, Baldwin Locomotive Works. Betty enjoyed spending summers with extended family at Ocean City NJ, a tradition she passed to her own children after her parents retired to the Jersey shore. It was here where she grew particularly close to her cousins and enjoyed many fun and carefree times. After graduating from Glen-Nor High School, she worked for the Penn Fruit Company at their Philadelphia headquarters.

Joe and Betty's life together started after a classic summertime pick-up. Sporting a sunburn (back when baby oil was "sun lotion" and the girls applied medical tape in the shape of their initials to their thighs to pull off after tanning), Betty was standing at an intersection when Joe pulled up and made a joke about whether she was the red light for the crosswalk. Married in September of 1952, they would have marked their 65th wedding anniversary this year.

After starting married life in Norwood, they built a house in Medford Lakes, on the edge of the New Jersey pine barrens. They started a family there, adopting as infants Suzanne in 1956 and Barbara in 1958 under the auspices of Catholic Charities. There, too, they established what would become important lifelong friendships, including with Marge and Jack Fox, the Eichfelds, and the Lincoln family. Betty was managing the household while Joe was working in sales, first for the Carnation Company's pet food division and then with Ross Laboratories, maker of the infant formula Similac.

After moving to Strafford PA in the early 1960s, they adopted Daniel. Joe later left Ross to pursue an interest in the world of investments and wealth management, working for firms including Dean Witter and Valley Forge Investments, before being lured back to Ross Laboratories, where he worked until retirement. When her youngest started high school, Betty started working part-time at the Tredyffrin Public Library in Strafford, repairing and processing books and assisting at the circulation desk; this afforded her a new circle of friends and focus as the home nest was emptying.



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Perhaps buoyed by memories from her Ocean City days, it had always been a desire of Betty's to live by the sea. This came true in retirement when they moved to a beachfront condominium in Cape Canaveral FL. They enjoyed seventeen years there before health issues prompted a move north to Annapolis in 2015 to a continuing care retirement community close to Dan and his husband Alistair.

Each of their friends over the years – some still with us, more not – would have taken away impressions or memories that capture parts or segments of a greater whole. His hunting or fishing buddies such as Tom Lincoln, Jack Fox, Jim McGrath, or Kevin Harris, could tell you about Joe's fearlessness in the face of dicey situations on the water, his good-humored taunts about fishing or fileting skills, his love and pride for his English Setter, Salty, and a battered old red hunting cap that Jack Fox finally made good on a threat to shoot one day to put it out of its misery. Betty's friends could reflect on her patience, grace, and humor in dealing with breast cancer that visited three times over the last thirty years, or her complete lack of pretense or egotism, even when it came to her ever-popular cheese cake, crumb cake, or apple crisp desserts.

Their children remember their parents as a loving couple in partnership through life: Joe was the traditional "breadwinner" and but Betty managed all of the household bills and budgeting (totaling figures with her trusty mechanical calculator); Joe usually took the lead with household medical issues ("looks like streptococcal pharyngitis") but studiously avoided dirty diapers; Joe managed the lawn care and landscaping (specializing in azaleas) while Betty took care of the upkeep inside; they participated together in husband-wife bowling leagues, made sure everyone was in church and CCD weekly, and hosted most of the large, extended family holiday gatherings. For many years, a framed print of the familiar poem by Dorothy Law Nolte, "Children Learn What They Live," was hanging in the house; those values ("... if a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty; if a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident; if a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient...") guided the upbringing of all three of their children. Chores and help around the house were expected and yielded many teachable moments, from how to replace an electrical outlet to folding laundry properly; rules were clear and enforced, but freedom to grow and explore was encouraged; cash allowances were slim and frugality promoted, while expressions of love in words and hugs and a myriad of other ways flowed in abundance.

Various snapshots will come to mind from those years: Betty's whiplash inducing attempts to learn how to drive a manual transmission; Joe using his blowtorch to get the candle wax unstuck from the pewter candleholder (the operation was a success but the patient died); the aluminum



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siding that went up after Joe's fall off the ladder while painting the exterior of the house; trips in the Impala station wagon to the drive-in theater with a Dairy Queen chaser; listening to the Phillies games on the screened porch and clapping back and forth with the neighbors when something (occasionally) went well for the team; wondering how high (and sparkly) Suzanne's platform shoes could get; various dead birds and other creatures in the garage freezer that Barb was saving for her drawing and painting; a decade's worth of Christmas caroling parties for Dan's high school friends, fortified with donuts and hot chocolate.

Betty and Joe's love for one another kept them going in the face of the increasing challenges and indignities of poor health in old age. Towards the end, they had kind and dependable caregivers like Kathy Johnson and Geraldine Boadu to assist with many of the chores of life that had become too difficult to manage independently. Frequent visits from their newest grandchild, Victor, never failed to put a smile on their faces. Their mutual teasing and good humor, their patience, and their faith helped to ease their spirits and combined to evoke a sense of grace and tranquility. They will be greatly missed.

All are welcome to a joint funeral service that will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, July 1st, at Christ Church, West River (220 Owensville Road, West River MD 20778). Donations in their memory may be made either to the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia, 100 North 20th St., Suite 301, Philadelphia PA 19103 (<https://www.catholiccharitiesappeal.org/donate>), or Tredyffrin Public Library, 582 Upper Gulph Rd, Strafford PA 19087.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Betty by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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