



Mrs. Joan M. Cooper

October 1, 1934 - July 21, 2025

Joan May (Smith) Cooper, 90, passed away Monday, July 21, 2025, at the Advent Christian Retirement Communities in Vernon, Vermont where she was a resident for six years.

She was born October 1, 1934 in Westerly RI to Arthur and Audrey Smith. Joan had one brother, Arthur B. Smith Jr. She participated in the Girl Scout program growing up, attended area schools, and graduated from Westerly High School in 1952. She completed the nursing program at the New Britain General Hospital School of Nursing in 1955. Joan married Raymond M. Cooper on October 6th, 1956, and moved to the Berkshires in western Massachusetts.

Joan attended Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, MA and then enrolled in Berkshire Christian College, graduating with a BA in Theology. She earned the Master of Education at Springfield College in Springfield, MA. Joan also completed a Master in Social Work at the State University of New York in Albany.

Joan joined the administration and faculty of Berkshire Christian College (Lenox, MA), in the fall of 1969 and remained a part of the college until its closure in 1986. She served as registrar, Director of Nursing, and Instructor in Psychology. Joan had a deep love for the college because that was where she first believed in Christ.

Joan led a very active and productive life. In addition to regular nursing positions, she served on community boards and supervised in nursing homes.

She was a member of Hope Church in Lenox, MA where she sang in the choir, participated in Bible studies, and was very dedicated to missionary activities. For twenty-one years she served as a board member of the Advent Christian Retirement Communities.

Joan lovingly cared for her mother, Audrey, for ten years until her death. She faithfully attended to the needs of her husband, Ray, in the nursing home, and also helped her sister-in-law, Grace Johnson. On November 26, 2011, Joan received the Good Neighbor Award presented by the City of Pittsfield. Her home on Holmes Road was a place of gracious hospitality to friends and family. Joan enjoyed reading, cooking, needlepoint, knitting and crocheting, as well as travel, driving, and international correspondence. She was feisty, fun, and generous to a fault.

Joan is survived by her nieces, Brenda Malcolm (Larry) and Audrey Smith of Rochester, WA.; a nephew, Matthew H. Smith of Charlestown, RI; cousins, nieces and nephews in her extended family. Joan also leaves behind special friends: Ellie Casoni, (husband Bob) whom Joan considered a daughter, of Alton Bay, NH, and LaVonne Brown (husband Steve) of Sandy Hook, CT, a close friend from Hope Church.

She is predeceased by her husband, Raymond M. Cooper (2007), by her brother Arthur Smith, and her sister-in-law Grace Johnson.

A graveside committal service will be held Friday morning, August 15, 2025, at 10 AM at the Stockbridge Town Cemetery on Main Street in Stockbridge, MA. A Celebration of Life is scheduled later that same day, at 2 PM in the chapel of the Vernon Green Building at Vernon Homes, 61 Greenway Drive, Vernon VT. A reception will follow. Funeral services are provided by Roche Funeral Home, Lenox, MA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Vernon Homes, 61 Greenway Drive, Vernon VT 05354.

Cemetery Details

Stockbridge Town Cemetery

Church Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262

Previous Events

Burial

AUG 15. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Stockbridge Town Cemetery
Church Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262

Tribute Wall

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“ I took care of Joan for many years at the Vernon Green, She was such an enjoyment. Her and snow bunny will always have a place in my heart. I moved to Maine over a year ago, however I returned to VT a few times. Joan NEVER forgot my name! She was my favorite, and id lay in bed with her at night and watch TV with her. may her sweet soul rest in peace.

Aimee E Harrison - August 20, 2025 at 11:10 AM

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“ Joan also cared for my ex-husband who lived next door to her on Holmes Rd. She was very kind towards him and my children. She also spent time in the nursing home with his Grandmother, and planned a service for her at her passing. Joan's kind heart and tireless good deeds touched so many lives in a positive way. Much love and condolences to her family.

Karen Sargent - August 15, 2025 at 08:27 AM