



Mrs Joanne Banta

October 3, 1927 - June 21, 2016

1927-2016 Joanne Donovan Banta, 88, of Lenox died on June 21 at her home in Lenox after a brief illness. Joanne was born in Syracuse, N.Y. on October 3, 1927, the daughter of the late Frank and Ellen Schramp Donovan, and sister of her late brother Bill.

Joanne lived in Binghampton, N.Y., through her school years and graduated from Binghampton High School in 1945. She went on to Swarthmore College, where she majored in zoology, and graduated in 1949.

Joanne's continuing fascination with the life sciences led her to a summer course in Marine Biology and Polar Exploration at the University of Oslo, Norway, before returning to the U.S. as a laboratory assistant at Yale University and Woods Hole. She then went on to three years at Huntington Laboratories, Harvard University, as a research assistant on a landmark study of the regeneration of rat liver.

During those years Joanne became close to her husband of 62 years, Joe, and they were married in 1954. Soon thereafter, she joined Joe in working for the CIA, based in Western Germany. Among her duties was maintaining files on suspected double agents.

After leaving the Agency in 1957, Joanne returned to the U.S. with her

husband and began raising her two sons, Ken and John, in Baldwin, N.Y. In 1963 the family moved to Frankfurt, Germany, and then Milan, Italy, as Joe took on senior management assignments in those cities with Morgan Guaranty. During her years in Europe Joanne honed her German and learned Italian, became a proficient skier, and developed a lifelong taste for Northern Italian cuisine and Alfa Romeo cars.

Returning to the U.S. and New Providence, N.J., in 1972, Joanne applied her science credentials to teaching roles in New Jersey schools and an outdoor education center. Moving to Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1978, she continued science teaching at New York City Technical College and then served there as a laboratory technician. Moving to Hancock, MA, in 1991, Joanne became active in local government, leading the Hancock board of health.

Joanne had a notably dry wit, but it was accompanied by great compassion. With her husband, she was a committed volunteer for numerous causes, from recordings for the blind to relief for the homeless. A fearless advocate for feminism, she was a role model for relatives and the many students she mentored.

Joanne was a fine cook, as comfortable with New England pot roast as Italian cuisine. Her continued passion for biology led to expert knowledge of New Jersey leaves and tree bark. A dedicated swimmer, she was also a gifted classical musician on the cello and piano. She was a passionate reader. A strong amateur painter, Joanne took up gouache in her final years.

Joanne will be greatly missed by, among many, her husband Joe, her sons John and Ken, her daughter-in-law Susan, her son-in-law Tony, her grandson Arlo and her granddaughter Tess.

A memorial service will be held at a future date.

Donations may be made in Joanne's name to Hospice Care in the Berkshires (<http://www.hcib.org/donate-to-hospice-care-in-the-berkshires>) <http://www.hcib.org/> or in care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.