

Civic-minded, Adventurous, Compassionate A Tribute to Joan Worzel Blair

A Remembrance by Elly Brosius, Friends and Family

At 84, Joan Blair was still helping people in need, sharing her vast knowledge and experience, being a steadying and encouraging presence for her close and far away family and friends. Though often in pain and very tired, she tirelessly continued an incredible life of service and dedication to family, friends, and community.

Wonderful, celebratory stories have been pouring in, along with the tears, from the visitors and callers to Bill Blair, husband of 63 years, and her children Bill Jr, Marc, Vivian, and me, Elly.

In a community which was so dependent upon volunteers, Joan and Bill were always first to raise a hand to help. Joan volunteered weekly at the Hope Clinic for some years, making sure eligible folks in need of health care got care. She made and ladled out chicken soup on some cold parade days down at the waterfront to raise funds for Hope.



Joan W. Blair 1930-2014.
Photo: July 2006 on Celebrity's
Cruise Ship *Infinity*

Joan was on the clean up committee and more with the Oriental Women's Club, and raised funds for their good works in the community. With Vivian, she handled tickets and programs as Pamlico Chorale's "Matriarch of the House Committee" as dear friend Reba Tiller called her.

And then there was the dancing! Ann Holton giving us love and support in the first few days of grieving stopped by and expressed thanks and joy about how when Mom and Dad first arrived in the county, they started teaching line dancing at the Senior Center and that got the county moving!

Joan and Bill were known for their dancing and how much they loved it. Spontaneous dancing happened in our kitchens and living rooms wherever we lived. We watched many Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies

together and Mom sure kept up with Dancing with The Stars.

It is impossible to mention all the groups and causes she was involved in. A few more include supporting Democrats, the Pamlico County Historical Association, and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Joan helped with her father's campaign for US Congress. Harold Worzel didn't win, but received a higher than usual percentage for a Democrat in that district. For her mother, Eleanor Worzel, a nurse, Joan and Bill took care of 3 beach rental homes on Fire Island in NY.

When any of us kids had an issue, she was donating or joining committees for improving our lives. She attended countless concerts, athletic events, school picnics and PTA meetings.

Did we mention the dancing thing? Let's say it again! She loved and excelled at dancing, still swinging hips in rhythm in the hospital while standing with a walker.

Her dear friends Ruth and Dick Clifford of Wisconsin said, "We remember commuting on the Long Island RR with Joan and Vinny. It always livened up Fridays.

TGIF." Joan worked as a buyer in big department stores in Manhattan after an associates degree in merchandising.

The Clifford's continued, "Joan's husband Bill, a very talented dancer, was always partnered by Joan, who was always a gifted dancer. We remember Joan and Bill teaching line dancing on Fire Island. We remember how supportive in Bill's singing,



Photo: William and Joan Blair, November 11, 1951 Bayshore, NY

acting, dancing and piano Joan was."

She made everyone feel welcome. She kept us up to date on who was where. She reached out near and far to give and receive the happenings of life.

Traveling was another passion. There were so many road trips, for fun and family and to teach us about our country, to see its resources and know its history. There were cruises and tours of Europe, the Caribbean, Alaska. The Cliffords once flew to Canada and rendezvoused

with Joan and Bill for a wonderful bus tour of that county.

Mom was adventurous with technology, too. The pushing-all-the-buttons technique worked for her. She was using an iPad, checking e-mail and Facebook often. She used the DISH DVR!

Playing Words with Friends was the latest way she displayed a mastery of words. She enjoyed the 50 point

bonus for 7 letter words in Scrabble frequently. She played hours of Boggle with me as I grew up, teaching me obscure 3 letter words and fair, competitive spirit.

She was courageous and successful with her complicated medical care. She used complementary modalities like acupuncture and therapeutic supplements. She participated in clinical trials. She successfully used hypnosis to quit smoking in 1976.

Joan offered motherly advice to many. Younger or older, folks appreciated Miss Joan's wise life

direction, her cooking experience, her investing strategies. She found ways to laugh and keep others laughing to get through the difficult times.

Joan loved how food could bring people together or help them cope, recover, heal, feel restored. Her homemade chicken soup was always at the ready to warm a soul and mend a body.

Whether it be for everyday, for holidays, for a large crowd doing work for a person in need, or for a parade, Joan would cook fantastic meals. She loved to make roasts and Italian dinners and no recipe intimidated her. Her lobster parties with bay scallop appetizers, clams on the half shell, shrimp cocktail, and home grown veggies were an annual treat for the neighbors in Oakdale, NY. If the water wasn't boiling for crabs or pasta, it was for silver queen corn on the cob. Many marveled how skillfully she could pick a crab or lobster for every last tasty morsel there.



Photo: Bill and Joan Blair, July 2006 Banff, Canada

In NY, fishing for flounder was a favorite pastime on our boat. She most often won the nickel on the first fish caught, and often on the biggest fish.

When we got a Wii game, inspired by its rehab potential after Bill's stroke, Joan partic-

ipated not so much by playing, but by telling the ball to get "over, Over, OVER!" toward our target. She made rehab livelier, more enjoyable. Her Wii Mii character also got the most makeovers with new hairdos and accessories

reflecting her great in-person style and fashion sense.

"We will always cherish the warm camaraderie and love of Joan Blair," remarked the Cliffords. "She sleeps in God's presence."

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