



Janet R. Johnston

June 29, 1930 - July 2, 2020

Janet Rae Butterfield Johnston passed away Thursday July 2, 2020 at the Green Acres Assisted Living Facility in Mt Pleasant, MI. Janet was born the daughter of Reynolds and Gertrude (Schwehn) Butterfield on June 29, 1930 in Mt Pleasant, Michigan. She married United States Air Force Sgt. Joseph F. Johnston of Clare, Michigan on August 16, 1952. They lived in England briefly during the Korean War and returned to Clare to operate the Johnston Elevator, currently the community's oldest business. Janet supported Joe through the ups and downs, and the relentless hard work of running a family business. She had great respect for the long time employees at the mill and valued the contributions Johnston Elevator was able to make to the Clare community. Jan was first and foremost one of the three Butterfield sisters, all beautiful, talented and smart as hell. She maintained a close and loving relationship with sisters Anne and Connie throughout her life. Ann moved to California to become an educator and raise a family. Connie attended Purdue and moved to North Brook, Illinois. Jan considered her family and her wonderful sisters, their love and lifelong connection to be among her greatest blessings in life. The sisters all made it a priority in life to visit each other and stay involved in each other's lives despite the distance between them. Janet was the Valedictorian of her Mt Pleasant High School Senior Class and graduated from Michigan State University with Honors. Jan's lifelong love of music and song found purpose in her career as an elementary music teacher at Clare Public Schools. Jan also served as a Choir member and the Choir

Director for many years at the Congregational Church in Clare. Jan loved her Church community and gained lifelong strength and perspective through worship, bible study and prayer. Later, as a music and theatre teacher at Mid-Michigan Community College, Jan produced a variety of musical productions during the 80s with students and staff. She organized group trips to New York and London to see Broadway Productions and plays. Jan loved nothing more sharing her love of music, song and art with her students and friends. She was a great letter writer and listener, and would light up with interest in any discussion of religion or the arts. Jan was blessed to have the friendship and support of so many great families, neighbors and friends while raising her family in Clare and during her later years in Mount Pleasant. Known for being able to walk 4 miles an hour, Jan loved nothing more than blazing around Lake Shamrock with one of her many good friends in Clare. Like many Clare Moms in the 60s and 70s Jan balanced work, community service, and church obligations while raising her three children. She created an absolutely wonderful childhood for her kids and encouraged them to discover and pursue their own interests. While they may not have inherited their parents' musical talents, Jan's kids did inherit her love of the outdoors and nature. Both of her sons moved out west and worked as Park Rangers in Yellowstone before moving on to other outdoor adventure careers. She delighted in visiting them, experiencing the mountain west and sharing in their adventures. She was capable of the outrageous. In the summer of 1976 Jan loaded up a van with her then thirteen year old son, Mike and drove out to Yellowstone, tent camping along the way, to visit her oldest son Doug who was working at the Old Faithful Lodge. While in Yellowstone, one day she climbed Avalanche and Hoyt Peaks in a single day, earning the admiration of a bunch twenty-something backcountry hiker/climbers. They couldn't believe a 46 year old mom from Michigan showed up in good enough shape to keep up. During the drive back to Michigan she insisted Mike read the entire book *The Hobbit* aloud while she drove 12 hour days this was both before books on tape and before anyone had heard of *The Hobbit*. Heading eastbound she swung down

through Colorado to pick up ten cases of Coors for friends back home. Coors was a rare treat back then. She was a pretty cool Mom. Jan's daughter Jennifer built a life, family and career around her love of horses as a horse trainer, riding instructor and founder of Schunk Stables. Jan was so proud to have a daughter who followed her dreams and simultaneously was able to give back so much to her family and community. Jan once said that parents sometimes see their reflections in their children, and that her daughter's reflection shined brightest. Jan was kind to the other kids in the neighborhood and welcomed her children's friends in her home. Joe and Jan worked hard and created a home full of music and laughter, Sunday nights with popcorn and apple slices by the fire watching the Walt Disney, Christmas Eve caroling around the piano when a rare snort of whiskey might be allowed to "loosen up the vocal chords, modest road trips, hanging out for days at the Clare County Fair, Clare Marching Band performances (thanks Mr. Finley) or ball games, family adventures at the Lincoln Hunt Club, Eight Point Lake, or Mackinac Island. Jan encouraged her children to count their blessings, listen to and respect others, but be able to laugh at themselves. After her deep involvement for many years at her church she found meaning through volunteer work at her P.E.O. Sisterhood in Mt Pleasant creating career and educational opportunities for young women. After retiring in Mt Pleasant Jan moved into the Green Acres Assisted Living Facility. The Johnston and Schunk Families would like to thank wonderful staff at Green Acres for being so attentive and careful to Jan during her last few years.

Jan is survived by her two sisters Ann (Butterfield) Nobile and Connie (Butterfield) Scott; her daughter, Jennifer (Byron) Schunk of Clare Michigan, her sons, Douglas (Laura) Johnston of Grand Junction, Colorado, and Michael (Bernice) Johnston of Missoula, Montana; six grandchildren, Steven, Andy, Josephine, Everett, Samuel and Reynolds; three great grandchildren, Gavin, Reed and Theodore.

Memorial Services for Jan will be held by the family at a date to be

announced. Arrangements were coordinated by the Clare Chapel of
Stephenson-Wyman Funeral Home. On-line guestbook at www.stephenson-wyman.com

Cemetery Details

Cherry Grove Cemetery

1000 Cedar St.
Clare, MI 48617

Tribute Wall

JB

“ I have so many fond memories of Jan! She was the classiest lady I have ever known, and she taught me a lot about living life through adversity and pain. I cherish the times we gathered in Bible study and I think of her every time I look at the lovely china teacup she gave me.

She loved the Lord and freely shared her gifts and talents with the churches she attended throughout her life. The world is a little less bright with the loss of her spiritual light, but I know she is now singing with the heavenly host.

My sincere condolences to all the family. May God bless and keep you as you mourn her passing.

Janice Buckley

Janice Buckley - July 13, 2020 at 12:10 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Janet R. Johnston.



July 12, 2020 at 04:04 PM

KB

“ She was a delight...positive, encouraging...and an ever present smile...Condolences to you all...

Kevin Ballou - July 11, 2020 at 10:19 AM



Thanks Kevin!

Mike Johnston - July 12, 2020 at 07:46 PM

HC

“ *Jan and Joe were our neighbors on Washington Road in Clare. They were great friends and always filled our hearts with joy and laughter. Jan was the type of person you could always look up to and respect both as a professional and a private individual. We loved her and Joe and know that their time in heaven will be happy and full of memories from their time on this Earth. RIP Jan.*

Helenan and Jerry Cvalieri - July 08, 2020 at 11:03 PM

JJ

“ *Jenny, Mike and Doug: sending deepest sympathies to you and your families. I have many good memories of your mom. She's dancing with Joe in heaven now. May all your memories carry you through.*

Jane Forsberg Jasek - July 07, 2020 at 07:11 PM

BL

“ *Jan became a very close and special friend when she moved back to Mt Pleasant to the condo. We shared dinner, wine and walks together. We also were PEO sisters. I visited often when she moved to Green Acres and we went to church together. I am so thankful for my wonderful memories of a lovely lady. She is at peace and with your dad again. Prayers to your whole family. Barb Lindley*

Barbara Lindley - July 07, 2020 at 02:24 PM

AM

“ *The members of First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant MI fondly remember Jan singing in the church choir. We will continue to hold your family in our prayers and thoughts.*

Andrew Miller - July 07, 2020 at 10:35 AM

NE

“ *So sorry to hear of Jan's passing. Our sympathy goes to the children and their families. We knew Jan when she was fresh out of college when she came to Farwell High School to teach music. She started a boys choir and probably had the largest boys choir that Farwell ever had! My husband was one that joined! Then moving to Clare after we were married met her at school and knew of her many talents. Many good memories of her. Nancy and Lee Eisenhauer*

Nancy Eisenhauer - July 06, 2020 at 08:40 PM

NB

“ *Nancy & Bruce Bauer lit a candle in memory of Janet R. Johnston*



Nancy & Bruce Bauer - July 06, 2020 at 04:27 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Janet R. Johnston.*



July 06, 2020 at 01:26 PM

SD

“ Doug, Jennifer, and Michael, I hope you are feeling the peace that comes when a life well lived comes to an end. She was a stunningly beautiful woman, inside and out. We were lucky to have her graceful presence in our little town. On top of that, she and your dad raised three good kids. Life doesn't get much better than that. Love to you and your families.

Sally Meek Dunlop - July 05, 2020 at 10:27 PM

DH

“ Never saw her without that awesome smile! She loved working with young people and did so much for to help with a variety of community activities. Our family sends our thoughts prayers to all of the Johnston family.

Doug Haggart - July 04, 2020 at 07:50 PM

EB

“ Thoughts and prayers are with the family . So many great memories with her as an excellent choir teacher at Farwell high school. RIP Jan.

Eileen Brow - July 04, 2020 at 03:18 PM

MG

“ Jenny and Bryon, we were saddened to hear of your mom's passing yesterday. You're both are blessed with a strong and loving family along with a community that values the same. All our regards.
Mark,Lynn and Alison Green

Mark Grren - July 04, 2020 at 09:07 AM

BH

“ I will always remember Jan with a smile on her face and a song on her lips. You are all in my heart during this difficult time.

Bruce Hales - July 03, 2020 at 06:36 PM

RS

“ Rebecca Shear lit a candle in memory of Janet R. Johnston



Rebecca Shear - July 03, 2020 at 04:55 PM



“ To Jenny and the boys, our deepest sympathy and prayers for God's grace in healing your grief. Hugs 🍷 Phil and Char

Char Smock - July 03, 2020 at 04:24 PM

GW

“ Jan had such a bright and friendly spirit. She spread cheer with her singing and friendliness at the Congregational Church. She was a wonderful Mom and person. She lived life well and we were all better for knowing her. She will be missed. My sympathies to her family.

Gail Wolfe - July 03, 2020 at 08:42 AM

PB

“ Sending prayers and hugs. Have heard wonderful stories about your mother. God's blessings sent your way.

Pastor Connie Bongard - July 03, 2020 at 08:28 AM

JS

“ *Jan was the sweetest person. She had such a impact on my life. I still love to sing because of her. Wonderful memories. Thank you Jan.*

Joy Shilling - July 03, 2020 at 08:13 AM

JM

“ *So sorry to hear about your mother.*

Jeanie Mishler - July 02, 2020 at 10:37 PM