



Joan Hardie Munford

October 25, 1933 - November 11, 2020

Joan Hardie Munford died on November 11, 2020, in Christiansburg, Virginia. Joan spent her life caring for others. She was a devoted family member, educator, healthcare administrator, and elected leader. Joan is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Mary and David Harder; her grandsons James Harder and Benjamin Harder, and his wife Jacquelyn Harder; and great-grandchildren Cole and Airlie Harder.

Joan was born October 25, 1933, into a loving and musical family in Blacksburg, Virginia. She attended Blacksburg High School (Class of 1951), where she met her husband-to-be, Thomas William Munford, Jr. She attended Radford College with a major in Education. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, and her brother, Thomas D. Hardie.

Joan's parents, John D. Hardie and Hester Price Hardie, were well known business owners, which included the popular Hardie House Restaurant, and Joan was soon involved in the family business. Along with her brother and other Blacksburg investors, she was a founding owner of a property and nursing home development corporation organized in the early 1970's. She became a licensed nursing home administrator and served in that capacity for Heritage Hall in Blacksburg. As the Heritage Hall chain grew to seventeen nursing homes across the state, Joan's career grew with it as she became Vice President of Operations.

Joan's interest in healthcare and the elderly expanded to include government policy, and in 1981, at the age of 47 and as a political outsider, she ran as the Democratic candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates in the 13th District. To the surprise of political pundits, she soundly beat a longtime Republican incumbent and began what would be a 12-year tenure in the Virginia Legislature. In that era she was proudly one of only 8 women in the 100-member House of Delegates.

In part because of her stunning victory, as well as a reflection of her business experience, Joan was rewarded with three coveted legislative committee assignments—Corporations, Insurance and Banking; Labor and Commerce; and Education. As a member of the Education Committee she chaired numerous special committees including crafting guidelines for introducing Family Life Education into school curriculum. Although a controversial issue, Joan's reserved and humble leadership disarmed opponents and, in the end, she was joined by both moderates and conservatives to pass Family Life lessons into the Commonwealth's curriculum. She brought the same quiet strength to her work on the historically contentious Labor and Commerce Committee. An advocate for workers rights, Joan used her experience as a business developer and employer to find bipartisan support from the pro-commerce members of the committee to pass reasoned workplace safety regulations. Joan also led significant revisions to the Child Labor Laws, working, in particular, to secure safer and healthier working conditions for migrant children. At the time of her retirement she served as Chair of the committee.

As she achieved seniority, Joan focused her leadership on health and education issues. She championed legislation that strengthened nurse practitioners' responsibilities, studied health insurance premiums, brought millions of dollars to fund capital projects and academic programs at Virginia Tech, and built legislation around advancing early childhood and preschool

education.

Known as a legislator and business owner, Joan was equally passionate about music. She loved to play piano. To her delight, she was often asked to play during receptions at the Governor's Mansion and events for the legislature. Joan enjoyed playing show tunes, standards and holiday music. She had a bright smile at the keyboard and passed her love for music to her daughter and grandchildren.

Throughout her professional career and following her retirement from elected office in 1993, Joan remained active in a number of local and regional organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for First National Bank of Christiansburg, the Carilion New River Valley Medical Center, and a member of the first planning committee for Virginia Tech's highly successful Choices and Challenges Forum Series.

Joan was a woman of great faith, starting each day with some quiet time with God. She spent her earlier years at Blacksburg Baptist Church, but later joined Blacksburg Presbyterian Church where she served as a member of the Session and various other committees. Sadly, in her later years Joan suffered from dementia. Despite this, she continued to have the gift to be able to play the piano for the pleasure of her family and friends at Commonwealth Senior Living Sweet Memories until nearly the last days of her life.

There will be a graveside service at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg on Monday, November 16 at 2:00 pm. Online condolences may be offered to the family at mccoynfuneralhome.com. Memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association at alz.org.

Cemetery Details

Roselawn Memorial Gardens

2880 N. Franklin Street
Christiansburg, VA

Previous Events

Graveside Service

NOV 16. 2:00 PM (ET)

Roselawn Memorial Gardens
2880 N. Franklin Street
Christiansburg, VA

Tribute Wall

LN

“ *She was a Wonderful family woman Empathetic and talented*

Lynda Bishop Nelson - November 22, 2020 at 07:03 PM

R(

“ *Many condolences to the family. She was one of my sweetest residents at Commonwealth Senior living. The morning of her passing I sat with her for about 30 minutes singing hymns to her to comfort her. I will always remember my "hunny"*

Reba Hamlett (RCA) - November 20, 2020 at 09:25 PM

LN

Thanks

Lynda Bishop Nelson - November 22, 2020 at 07:04 PM

DL

“ *Mary & David - so sorry to hear of the loss of your Mom- she was a woman ahead of her time! Having known her through BPC and Sunday School & David's Dad with our Dad
Best Wishes & Stay Safe
David Lucas*

Dave Lucas - November 20, 2020 at 09:17 PM

BB

“ I remember meeting Joan through my dads best friend, Dick Frizzell, many moons ago. She was present at most events that we attended and always spoke. She was an icon in Blacksburg for as long as I can remember. A true legacy of her time. Much love and prayers to her family during this time.

Beth Blevins
Lexington NC

Beth Blevins - November 17, 2020 at 12:05 PM

EC

“ I knew Joan from my visits to my mother Charlotte Beamer at Commonwealth Senior Living. We enjoyed her piano concerts. We enjoyed knowing her as a gracious and caring person. My last memory of Joan was after my mother passed away and I was removing her personal things from her room and Joan came down to stand by the doorway so that she could give me a last hug. I was so touched. Joan was a very special person. My condolences.
Elizabeth Beamer Craig

Elizabeth Craig - November 17, 2020 at 11:14 AM

CW

“ Dear Mary, David, and Family,

So sorry to hear of Joan's passing. It was fun to hear James in 1985 "campaigning" for his Grandmother. She was always fair in the Legislature.

Love to all of you,

Clark Wade

Clark Wade - November 16, 2020 at 12:14 AM

PD

“ Dear Mary and Family, I'm so sorry to hear of Joan's passing. Fondly, I remember the good times we had opening the Leesburg facility. Joan was a very special person. My thoughts and prayers are with you and the family.
Peggy Davies

Peggy Bryant Davies - November 15, 2020 at 04:56 PM

LD

“ Dear Mary, David and family,
Joan was a woman ahead of her time- a business woman, a public leader, a person devoted to family.
Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.
Linda and Jimmy Deemer

Linda Deemer - November 15, 2020 at 01:58 PM



“ Dave & Mary -
We are so sorry to hear of your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you !

Steve & Debbie Shaver

Debbie Shaver - November 14, 2020 at 06:32 PM

DA

“ I feel so grateful to have gotten to know Joan. She was a truly kind, warm and caring person and went out of her way to make every person feel special. Though I haven't seen her for several years I think of her often and miss her sweet smile.

Daina M Aistrop - November 14, 2020 at 05:43 PM

DI

“ *Rest in peace Joan*



Diane - November 14, 2020 at 02:32 PM

OS

“ *Brenda and I are so very sorry for the loss of your beautiful Mother. I met Joan on several occasions when your Dad; Bill. worked for me as an electrician at Federal Mogul. Our thoughts and prayers with each family member and her many friends. Love to all. Orville and Brenda Sluss.*

Orville Sluss - November 13, 2020 at 07:09 PM