



Joann Rautenberg

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After residing in Schnectady, NY for fifty years, where Joann Rautenberg became a well-known pianist and her husband Ted was a physicist for General Electric for his entire career, the couple retired to The Pines at Davidson in 2004. Joann had gotten to know the Pines well when her mother, Eunice Jordan Johnston, was one of the earliest residents. For Ted, an avid sailor, the proximity of Lake Norman was a special draw. They had found the perfect place to retire, close to Joann's hometown of Mooresville. The Rautenbergs joined Davidson College Presbyterian Church and quickly knit themselves into the fabric of the Pines community: Ted joined the Davidson College Orchestra as 4th French horn, and Joann set about founding and organizing the Pine Tones, which she accompanied at the piano for almost the next two decades. In addition, she gave many piano recitals at the Pines over the years. The couple loved showing off the college campus and the town of Davidson to visiting family and friends.

Joann was the first child of Harrison Nathaniel Johnston and Eunice Jordan Johnston of Mooresville, NC. She is survived by her beloved sister Natalie Johnston Matheson and her cherished siblings-in-law: John Rautenberg,

Carla (Len Friedson) Rautenberg, and Sarah (Edward) Holden. Also surviving are her treasured nephews and nieces: Sharon (Michael) Godbout, Michael McKoy Matheson, Paul (Sandy) Rautenberg, Lisa Rautenberg, Amy Fletcher, Katherine (A.J.) Jensen and Seth (Geneses) Holden, as well as thirteen great-nieces and -nephews, two great-great nephews and one great-great niece. Preceding Joann in death were her beloved husband Theodore H. Rautenberg III in 2015, nephew Jack Holden in 2016, brother-in-law Edgar McKoy Matheson in 2022, and sister-in-law Lana Kay Rautenberg in 2023.

Just prior to graduating from the University of North Carolina in 1952 as a math major, Joann attended a college job fair. She was offered two positions: one with the CIA and the other with General Electric in Schenectady. She chose the latter, where she wrote programs for early computers when computer programming was a barely known occupation. She also met a young physicist who had graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts: Ted Rautenberg. He was already playing French horn in the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra and the orchestra of the Schenectady Light Opera Company. When Ted asked Joann out for their first date, he took her to a string quartet concert. They bonded over a shared love for music as well as for each other, and were married in Mooresville in June 1954.

After six years, Joann resigned from GE to devote herself to the piano full time. She became the staff pianist for the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra, the Schenectady Light Opera Company, the College of Saint Rose and the Capital Artists Opera Company. And she continued to hone her skills by studying with pianist and composer Joseph Fennimore. She played works for four hands with her colleague and good friend Hazel Bundy, including many composed by Fennimore, their mutual teacher. She was soon sought after by vocalists and instrumentalists as a collaborative pianist. The mathematician was transformed into an accomplished musician.

In addition to playing their instruments, Joann and Ted attended many concerts, sometimes taking the train down to New York City to enjoy cultural events and Broadway shows. They bought a little bungalow in Alplaus, a suburb of Schenectady, that was their home until they moved to the Pines. Over the years, the couple enjoyed international travel, explored the U.S. national parks, and spent many happy times with family and friends at Cranberry Lake in the Adirondacks. They always loved sailing their own boat on Great Sacandaga Lake near Schenectady, and later, Lake Norman. Joann especially loved it when Ted made her a whiskey sour on the boat! Known for her quick wit and (seldom withheld) pithy opinions, Joann was a great foil to thoughtful and methodical Ted, creating a truly wonderful partnership that lasted 61 years. After Ted's death, Joann continued giving solo piano recitals and accompanying the Pine Tones like the trouper she always was, until health problems forced her to retire from performing in 2024.

A devoted daughter, sister, wife, sister-in-law, aunt and great-aunt with a dynamite sense of humor, Joann was a light in the life of all of her family. As so many at the Pines can attest, she had a special gift for friendship - and fun! She will be deeply missed.

For many years, but particularly since January 2024, the devotion of Joann's friends and the care she received from the remarkable staff at the Pines and two private caregivers was absolutely extraordinary. Her extended family could not be more grateful.

We will celebrate Joann Rautenberg's life on Sunday, March 30 at 2:00 p.m. in the Davidson Room at The Pines of Davidson, 400 Avinger Lane, Davidson, NC 28036.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Ada Jenkins Center in

Davidson, the Residents' Support Fund at the Pines, or a charity of your choice that makes you think of Joann.

Cavin-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory, Mooresville, is serving the Rautenberg family. Condolences may be made to the family at www.cavin-cook.com.