



## Joan Beverly Brittan

September 6, 1941 - April 3, 2025

### In Loving Memory of Joan Beverly Brittan

Joan Beverly Brittan, age 83, passed away peacefully at her home on Thursday, April 3, 2025, surrounded by the love and comfort of her family.

Born in Washington, D.C., Joan was the beloved daughter of the late John and Mildred Walter. From an early age, Joan's adventurous spirit shone brightly. Alongside her brother Joe, she fearlessly explored the streets of the city, often venturing beyond the bounds of their neighborhood in search of fun and mischief. As a teenager, she was known for zipping around in her turquoise Ford convertible, soaking in life's moments and generously doting on her younger siblings with gifts and spontaneous outings.

Joan's most cherished role in life began when she married her first husband, Ronald Speiden, and became the devoted mother of three children: Rick, Sheila, and Shelly. She was a mother in every profound sense—nurturing, compassionate, and fiercely supportive. Joan poured her heart into raising her children, always going above and beyond in encouraging their individuality and dreams. Her love knew no bounds.

Her role as "Nana" (or lovingly, "Nanda") to her grandchildren brought her even greater joy. Known for her energy, warmth, and endless generosity, Joan

built lasting bonds with each grandchild—and later, her great-grandchildren—whom she visited often and spoiled with love. Her family will always treasure the summers they spent together, and the joy she brought into their lives.

Joan found her calling as a culinary arts teacher with the Prince George's County, MD school system, specifically at Croom Vocational High School. She was a beacon of inspiration and support for her students, many of whom faced personal challenges. Her impact was profound—one of her former students, Bryan, credits her guidance and mentorship for his success as a 5-star chef in a nationally renowned D.C. hotel. Joan often referred to him as her “second son,” and their bond endured through the years.

Although she endured the heartbreak of being widowed three times, Joan found deep love and companionship with each of her husbands—Ronald Speiden, Lawrence Soper, and James Brittan. Each love story added richness to her life and brought her immeasurable happiness.

Joan had many passions, but none lit up her heart quite like cooking and cake decorating. She poured love and creativity into every dish she made, and her cakes were nothing short of masterpieces—elegant, intricate, and crafted with care for weddings, birthdays, and every celebration in between. Her artistry in the kitchen was matched only by the joy she found in sharing her creations with others.

Outside the kitchen, Joan's lively spirit truly shone at the card table. With razor-sharp instincts and a legendary poker face, she was a force to be reckoned with—especially when playing poker with family or hearts with her grandsons. Always playful and full of wit, her parting words before a winning hand were often a soft hum of “Know when to hold 'em,” a wink to Kenny Rogers and a gentle warning that her opponents were in trouble.

Friday night bingo was another treasured tradition—a weekly ritual filled with laughter, good company, and friendly rivalry, often shared with her sister, mother, cousin, and close friends. These simple, meaningful gatherings captured the essence of who Joan was: vibrant, generous, and always bringing people together in love and laughter.

A spirited fan of the Maryland Terrapins men’s basketball team, Joan rarely missed a game, decked out in her favorite jerseys and cheering passionately with her signature chant: “No basket, Maryland get the ball!” Her love of sports extended to the Washington Redskins, whom she supported faithfully—even through the losses. A highlight of her fandom was attending the inaugural game at RFK Stadium, where she famously caught a field goal ball and later donated it back to the team in 1978. She also adored watching Tiger Woods—whom she affectionately referred to as “her Tager”—but only if he made the cut.

In 1991, Joan embraced retirement and relocated to Myrtle Beach, SC with her second husband, Larry. There, she continued her active and generous lifestyle. She proudly served as President of the American Legion Post 178 Ladies Auxiliary in the mid-1990s and volunteered with Myrtle Beach Meals on Wheels. Joan also created joyful experiences for local children and developed a special friendship with a young neighbor, David. The two spent hours drawing, playing, and laughing—parting each visit with hugs and his sweet words: “You’re my best friend, Ms. Joan.”

Joan was preceded in death by her three beloved husbands, Ronald Speiden, Lawrence Soper, and James Brittan; her son, Richard Speiden; sister, Carole Fischer; brother, Joseph Walter; and brother-in-law, Jack Spadaro.

She is survived by her daughters, Sheila Gauntt (Stuart) and Shelly Pesato;

her cherished grandchildren, Ashleigh Rolland (William), Kyle Whelan, Ronald Jett, Shannon Valenti (Joe), Vincent Pesato, Heather Libonati (Nick), and Sarah Gauntt; and great-grandchildren, Aaliyah, Hailey, Zoey, Philip, Willow, Olive, and Margo. She is also survived by her loving siblings, Darlene Spadaro and Dennis Walter (Susie).

A Visitation will be held at 10:00 AM Monday, April 14, 2025. A Funeral Service to honor and celebrate Joan's life will follow at 11:00 AM at Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel.

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel is serving the family.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

APR **14**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Goldfinch Funeral Home Beach Chapel  
11528 Highway 17 Bypass  
Murrells Inlet  
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

# Tribute Wall



“ *Goldfinch Funeral Services created a Webcast in memory of Joan Beverly Brittan*



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**Goldfinch Funeral Home** - April 14, 2025 at 09:58 AM

GB

“ *I too first met Joan at the Pizza Platter in Bladensburg the summer of 1972. I had just graduated from college and worked there for the summer. We became good friends immediately. After that we kept in touch through the years. She was a very good person and friend, always ready to listen. She will be missed. My condolences to all of her family.*

*Gwen (Kuykendall) Blakey*

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**Gwen Kuykendall Blakey** - April 27, 2025 at 03:20 PM

BE

“ I meet Joan as a young teenager working at the pizza platter in Bladensburg Md. At the time, little did I realize our friendship would grow and experience so many family memories over the many decades. Joan was always welcoming to me when I would call last minute to see if I could stop by for a visit. Never without hesitation she would say yes. During our time in the later years, most discussed was catching up on our family's of which Joan was so happy to do. She loved being a grand & great grandmother . My thoughts and prayers along with a heavy heart say, I love you!

*Bernie Brandts*

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**Bernie** - April 24, 2025 at 08:37 AM

AF

“ She was a great person working with her was a pleasure Anthony Fletcher coworker

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**Anthony Fletcher** - April 14, 2025 at 11:24 AM



“ Heavenly Heights Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joan Beverly Brittan.



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April 11, 2025 at 11:31 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joan Beverly Brittan.

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April 11, 2025 at 11:31 AM

DW

“ Dennis W. purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Joan Beverly Brittan.



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Dennis W. - April 11, 2025 at 09:11 AM

WW

“ Aunt Joan was there for her nephew Ron and I from the beginning she made our wedding cake. What a beautiful job. Always with a little wisdom. The last time she saw Ron at Joes house I was not there but Ron was tickled and had to tell me about it, you have to understand Ron had changed a lot over the years and walked up to him and said hi I'm Joan and he said hi I'm your nephew Ron! I was so glad I got to see her at Jack and Darlene anniversary party and watch her dance with her brother Joe!

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Wilseydee Walter - April 08, 2025 at 07:27 PM

SG

“ 53 files added to the album Mom



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Sheila Gauntt - April 08, 2025 at 03:59 PM

DF

“ *Darlene, Mike, and family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Joan Beverly Brittan.*



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**Darlene, Mike, and family** - April 08, 2025 at 11:34 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joan Beverly Brittan.*



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April 08, 2025 at 09:21 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joan Beverly Brittan.*

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April 08, 2025 at 09:21 AM

BE

“ *I didn't know this dear lady, but had to read about the beautiful lady in the photo. Thank you to her dear family for making her life wonderful!! The smile on her face is evidence of a life well lived and filled with joy! Her obituary is a tale of love and pure happiness! Prayers for you all to be filled with her love until you meet again!*

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**Beth Edwards** - April 08, 2025 at 08:36 AM