

JOHN AND BERENICE HOOTON

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN AND BERENICE HOOTON



In the span of just 19 days, we said our final farewells to a couple whose love story spanned an incredible 65 years. John Rimer Hooton, a man of passionate interests, a loving father, a devoted husband, and a cherished brother, peacefully passed away on October 21, 2023, at the age of 94. His beloved wife, Berenice C. Hooton, a beacon of warmth and kindness, joined him in the eternal embrace on November 9, 2023.

John, born on June 10, 1929, to Donald and Ruth (nee Rimer) Hooton, found his early passion for cycling in the neighborhoods of Crafton and Thornburg, PA. Graduating from the Hill School in Pottstown, PA, and later earning a B.A. in English Literature from Brown University in Providence, RI, he was a proud member of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity and a dedicated rower on the crew team. John's journey took a courageous turn when he enlisted in the U.S. Marines during the Korean War, serving as a Lieutenant with humility and earning a Bronze Star.

After his military service, John entered the insurance industry, following in his father's footsteps and representing John Hancock and New England Life. Later in his career, he became a Certified Financial Planner for Hefren-Tillotson, a firm he deeply respected. However, John's most profound impact was felt within his role as a family man.

John's life took a momentous turn when, after a serendipitous blind date arranged by his sister Virginia Hooton Thornburgh, he married Berenice Ann Conner in 1958, embarking on a remarkable 65-year journey together. They raised their family in Upper St. Clair, PA, where John's love and support for his children were unwavering. A man of diverse interests, John could be found on the tennis court, immersed in history books, or leading family and Boy Scouts on unforgettable bike trips. His dedication to transforming abandoned railroads into bike trails led him to become a longstanding Board Member and volunteer for the Montour Trail Council.

In their later years, John and Berenice embarked on a new adventure, moving to the vibrant Maple Leaf Community in Port Charlotte, FL. There, they forged close friendships and enjoyed an active lifestyle, sharing memorable jazz concerts with John's beloved sister Jane and brother-in-law Chuck Ince.

Berenice C. Hooton, born on June 18, 1934, in Corry, PA, was delivered into the world by her grandfather, Troy Gillette, MD, a small-town family doctor.

Graduating from the University of Georgia with master's credits from the University of Pittsburgh in child psychology, Berenice's career focused on nurturing strong and resilient children. She served as Assistant Director at the Carnegie Mellon Preschool for disabled children, operated her own nursery school in Chatham Village, Pittsburgh, PA, and dedicated fourteen years as Director of the Westminster Church Nursery School in Upper St. Clair, PA.

Berenice's tireless volunteer efforts were recognized with the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Pittsburgh Junior League in 1960. Her impact as President of the Friends of Family Hospice was immortalized in a heartfelt poem, "Berenice: One of a Kind." She contributed as a Board Member of the Peters Creek Historical Society, President of the Baker School PTA, and, alongside John, devoted twenty-five years to building gardens on the Montour Trail, commemorated by a bench in their honor.

A woman of style and grace, Berenice had a keen eye for color, decor, and fashion, sharing her skills with friends and neighbors. She shared John's love for tennis and cultivated her own passions for sewing, gardening, needlework, and refinishing antique furniture.

Berenice's infectious can-do spirit, ever-ready smile, genuine kindness, and sincere interest in others endeared her to a multitude of friends throughout her rich and fulfilling life.

The couple is survived by their three children: Jim Hooton, Kendall Welch, and Bill Hooton, along with his dear sister, Jane Ince, and four grandchildren.

To honor and celebrate John and Berenice's lives, a memorial service will be held on the Montour Trail, a place that held a special spot in their hearts. For details or to extend your condolences, contact: jameshooton@gmail.com. May their memories forever be a source of inspiration and comfort to us all.