

JOAN BLAIR SULLIVAN

1926 - 2024



Joan Blair Sullivan died peacefully on February 13, 2024, in Baddeck, Nova Scotia, surrounded by family and friends. Joan spent 94 summers in Baddeck, missing summers only for World War II, her husband's illness, and the pandemic. Joan was a dual citizen of the USA and Canada. She happily spent her last year in the beautiful Cape Breton village she loved. Her final months were made as comfortable as

possible by her fabulous caregivers together with the amazing and gifted palliative care and continuing care teams who collectively took loving care of her.

Born on September 25, 1926 in New York City, Joan Grosvenor Blair was the daughter of Joseph Paxton Blair and Gertrude Grosvenor Gayley. She was the oldest surviving grandchild of Gilbert and Elsie Grosvenor; and great-grandchild of Mabel and Alexander Graham Bell. Joan spent her childhood in New York City, Washington DC, Miami and Philadelphia. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1946 with a degree in medical illustration. Joan worked with her good friend, Jeanie Slaymaker, at the Country Bookshop on the Main Line outside Philadelphia.

Joan married Henry "Harry" Paul Sullivan in 1954. They lived in Bryn Mawr, PA, until 1967 when Harry took a new job in Pittsburgh and they moved to Sewickley, PA. Joan was an active volunteer for many years at the Watson Institute (formerly known as the DT Watson Home) for children with special needs.

Joan was a legendary sailor on Cape Breton's magnificent Bras d'Or Lakes racing her snipe (built by Jimmy MacKillop) and her yacht, Laughing Gull II. She was almost always in and around boats as a young girl and was taught to sail by the likes of Casey Baldwin, Jimmy MacKillop, step-father Sam Gayley, her mother and her aunt, Mabel Grosvenor. She had many fond memories of sailing with the MacManus sisters and others. Notably Joan handily outsailed a Canadian naval officer off a visiting frigate at age 18 in a pair of match races in snipes in 1945 after a bar bet by Casey Baldwin with sailors off the frigate.

After retirement in 1987, Joan and Harry spent 12 years cruising on Laughing Gull III from the Bahamas to the British Virgin Islands to the Dutch Antilles with family, friends, and their Siamese cats, Delilah and Samantha.

In later years, Joan traveled the world extensively with friends and family, visiting every continent. She enjoyed volunteering as a teacher's aide tutoring 1st graders with their reading. She loved learning their names and chatting with them during the year.

Joan is survived by her sons, Graham and Paul Sullivan (Barbara); and grandsons, Conor (April) and Trajan Sullivan. She is predeceased by Harry (d. 2000) and her son, Jeremiah "Jedd" (d. 2019).

A private burial service for the immediate post family will be held at Sewickley Cemetery. Joan will be laid to rest beside her husband, Henry Paul Sullivan.

A celebration of Joan's life will be held this summer in Baddeck, Nova Scotia. Details will be forthcoming.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Hospice Society of Victoria County, PO Box 279, 30 Old Margaree Road, Baddeck, Nova Scotia, B0E 1B0, Canada.

Arrangements entrusted to **R. D. COPELAND, LTD.**, Irvine Chapel, Sewickley.

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