

JOAN EIGER GOTTLIEB



Born in New York City, on August 12, 1935, Joan died on January 11, 2025, in Providence, RI. Her parents, Sadie Mantel and Sol Eiger, were teenage immigrants from Vienna and Warsaw, respectively. Joan and her two older brothers (Norman and Edwin) attended excellent New York public schools, and Joan graduated as Valedictorian from William H. Taft High School, and then with Honors in Biology from

C.C.N.Y. (City College, 1954). In her sophomore year, she met Milton Gottlieb, a kindred spirit majoring in physics, and the two married in 1957, when both were close to completing graduate school (at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania respectively). Their respective thesis work was finished in San Diego at the General Dynamics Labs, to which Milton's mentor had moved, and where Joan had access to library facilities at Scripps Institute nearby.

Thus began a 63-year marriage of joy and travel (both professional and recreational) throughout the United States and the world, accompanied by children, Erik and Sara, whenever possible. Milton accepted a career position in optical physics at the Westinghouse Research Labs in Pittsburgh, PA, and Joan continued her research on plant hormones while teaching Biology at the University of Pittsburgh. Years later, she taught first level and Advanced Placement Biology at Churchill High School (later renamed Woodland Hills).

In the late 1970s, Joan added a political phase to Gottlieb family life by winning the first (of four) terms on Churchill Borough Council. She was appointed to represent Churchill in the Area Environmental Council, where she promoted recycling and community composting. Along with other representatives, she produced local/regional "environmental advisories" on topics like invasive alien plants, gypsy moths, LED lights and more. Advocacy for and maintenance of the Borough (Bullock-pens) park (of French and Indian War fame) became a family tradition. Joan's home garden on Marbury Road eventually boasted about 185 species of ferns (a lifelong passion), and many native annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees. An avid member of the local garden club, Joan supervised "Adopt-A-Highway" cleanups and participated in a rain garden installation at the front of the Borough Building.

Although the early years at Brightview Senior Living in Wakefield, RI, were marked by the ravages of covid, Joan continued her passion for gardening via the care of three resident gardens outside the building. She developed and presented popular programs for residents on topics, including environmental awareness, windowsill gardening, appreciation of ferns, and she published several recent articles in the Hardy Fern Foundation Newsletter, including a final one about whisk ferns in the Fall 2024 Quarterly issue.

Joan was preceded in death by her husband, Milton, in 2020. Joan is survived by son, Erik Gottlieb (Nancy Ciccone); daughter, Sara Gottlieb (Wade Harrison); grandchild, Sage Bader-Gottlieb; and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to The Nature Conservancy in RI or PA, or a non-profit of choice.

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