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Joan W. Smith(1928 - 2016)



Joan Wright Smith, died peacefully on March 7, 2016 in Newton, Massachusetts, where she had recently moved from Washington DC. An exceptional woman of great spirit and intelligence, she packed a lot into her 87 years, including travels in 55 countries, and resided in France, Italy, Sri Lanka and the United States. Born September 23, 1928 in Philadelphia, Mrs. Smith grew up in Princeton, NJ, next door to Albert Einstein. According to the Ladies Home Journal, Joan wrote poetry when she could barely print. She studied at Miss Fines, Garrison Forest School, and Smith College (Class of 1950), spending her junior year in Paris. In 1953, she married William H. Rafter of San Francisco, with whom she had two children (Patrick & Story Rafter). After the couples divorce, Joan and her children moved to Washington, DC where she worked in public relations positions, including one with the newly-created National Endowment for the Humanities. A lifelong liberal: she campaigned for Stevenson and Kennedy, and wrote speeches for George McGovern. In 1967, she married Kellogg Smith, and welcomed his daughter Seely. In 1968, the Smiths and their three children moved to Tunisia, where Kellogg was Peace Corps Director and Joan was a translator for the hospital ship HOPE. In 1970, Joan and family moved to Rome, Italy where she worked as an editor and translator for the UN. From 1973-1995, the Smiths ran Bella Copia, a beautiful pottery shop in Romes historic center. They spent winters at a beach house in Sri Lanka, and summers at Le Petit Moulin, an ancient farmhouse in southwest France. They returned to live full time in Washington DC in 2004, with Kellogg passing away in 2007. In 2015, Mrs. Smith moved north to be near family, living her last year in Newton Lower Falls. Her survivors include daughters Seely Smith Harris of Florida and Story Rafter of Sausalito, California, her son Patrick Wright Rafter of Wellesley, Massachusetts, five loving grandchildren and dear friends on five continents. The family will hold private services at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to Doctors Without Borders / Mediciens Sans Frontieres. For guestbook and full obituary gfdoherty.com. Arrangements by George F. Doherty & Sons Funeral Home.

Published in The Newton Tab from Mar. 13 to Mar. 23, 2016