



## Joan Cohen

**November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1934 - November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Joan Claire Newman Cohen, died peacefully at her longtime residence in Durham, NC on November 10, 2023 at the age of 88.

Joan never met a stranger, and her family marveled at how she was often stopped by a former art student out in the community who was now not a child but an adult, to hug her and remind her of what a fabulous teacher she had been. Her high energy level took her to three supermarkets to procure ingredients on mornings before her family even awakened. She did this in order to produce an amazing dinner for any number of people invited to join the family around her beautiful dining table.

Joan and her late husband Kal traveled the world, and they loved to share memories of the adventures of their journeys. Joan relished her time and friends in her dinner clubs and book clubs over the years. With her cheerful voice and demeanor, Joan could charm anyone into doing anything for her, and she was always happy to do for others in return.

A Pennsylvania native, Joan was raised in Baltimore, Maryland. She earned her Bachelor's in Fine Arts degree at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburgh, PA. During her senior year of college, she met Kal, who was completing his economics PhD there. In 1974, Joan and Kal moved to Chapel Hill, NC where Kal taught at nearby Duke University.

Joan taught art at elementary schools in Pittsburgh and in Chapel Hill while pursuing her own art career. Joan proudly served as the art teacher at The Forest at Duke after moving there in 2009, instructing students from their 70's to 90's. Joan enjoyed a stellar reputation for her unique and whimsical ceramic sculptures. Her clay creations were widely displayed and sold in local galleries. She exhibited work at the North Carolina Museum of History (Art) in Raleigh and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. Her work was also displayed at the NC Botanical Garden's outdoor Sculpture in the Garden show since its inception and the annual Carolina Designer Craftsmen show.

Joan created the Saturday Adventures in Learning (SAIL) program to give lower income students access to art enrichment. For two decades, she served as a touring docent at the North Carolina Museum of Art. She was an active member of Judea Reform Synagogue in Durham for decades.

Joan was predeceased by her mother, Annabelle Teplitz Newman, and her father, Henry Newman, in Baltimore, and her husband Kal. She is survived by three children: Jon (Amy) of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Debbie (Bruce Edwards) of Chapel Hill; and Andy (Yemi Clinton) of Chapel Hill. She adored her five grandchildren: Geoffrey (Ludo Lusseau) of Montpellier, France; Ethan of Chattanooga; Aliza of Philadelphia; Danielle (Jake Weinreb) of San Francisco, CA; and Lena of Washington, DC.

If you wish to make a contribution in Joan's name in honor of her commitment to local arts education, please consider the following non-profit organizations: The Arts Center, [The ArtsCenter \(artscenterlive.org\)](https://www.artscenterlive.org); or the Durham Arts Council, [Home - Durham Arts Council](#).