



Josephine Sherfy

December 18, 1922 - November 21, 2021

On November 21, 2021, at the age of 98, Josephine Sherfy passed away peacefully at her home in Austin, Texas. A member of what some call "The Greatest Generation," she experienced a terrible economic depression, a world war, and monumental social and historical changes. These events would influence her lifelong commitment to family, education, equality and her efforts to help others. Josephine leaves behind her sons, daughters-in-law, grandsons, great grandsons, nieces, and a fascinating mix of friends who she loved and admired.

Edyth Josephine Crouch was born in Taylor, Texas on December 18, 1922, to Irene Crouch (née Krauskopf) and Frederick E. Crouch. The family moved to Austin shortly after she was born. Josephine had three brothers; Robert, Frederick, and Britain.

Josephine attended Austin High School and graduated from the University of Texas in 1945 earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. While this ended her formal public education, Josephine would spend the next 75 years challenging herself to expand her knowledge and share her experiences with friends. Later in life she would complete literature study programs in Leeds and York England, as well as many advanced arts, history, and literature courses in Washington DC and Austin, Texas. Her quest for experiences would have her visit many foreign countries in Europe and the United Kingdom. She

particularly loved vacations in New England; especially Vermont, but her favorite trip was to Turkey with the University of Texas Flying Longhorns.

Growing up in Austin, Texas in the 1920's and 30's, Josephine was confronted with the racial inequalities of the time. In November 1944, while riding on public transportation to the University campus after voting for the first time, she was angered when seeing African Americans confined to the rear of the bus when many were bravely serving overseas in the military during World War II. This experience would guide her conscience and settle her views concerning racial discrimination for the rest of her life. Josephine's social awareness also had her marching that same November with 8,000 other UT students protesting the "Death of Academic Freedom" when the UT Board of Regents, packed with conservatives by the Governor, fired the UT President because of his refusal to dismiss faculty members whom the Regents believed to be promoting "liberal views" and literature.

Josephine moved to Washington DC after college to work for Texas Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, and for a short time, the Federal agency dealing with Alien Property seized during World War II. She was then selected for an overseas position with the State Department; a career she had long coveted. It was while working on a special project for Congressman Johnson that Josephine met Laurence Sherfy, an attorney and Naval officer. She decided to refuse the overseas post, marry Laurence, and reside in the Washington area. They were married in May of 1947. Josephine would again assist Lyndon and Ladybird Johnson during the Presidential transition after the assassination of President Kennedy.

From 1950 to 1970, Josephine was busy raising her three sons and volunteering to help the cause of "junior" tennis in the Washington area. She shuttled kids to tournaments, club matches, and was part of a small group that created a junior tennis event hosted each year at the Edgemoor Club in

Bethesda, Maryland. The 1960's was a turbulent time in our nation and junior tennis was not unaffected. In 1966, Josephine along with several other parents drove 14 junior tennis players to a tournament in Richmond, Virginia. When one of the players, an African American, was not allowed to play his matches on the courts at the all-White country club, the other 13 boys withdrew from the tournament. If their friend couldn't play, they wouldn't play.

After her sons moved on to college, Josephine would help shape the development of professional tennis in the Washington area; including the birth of the women's professional circuit in 1972. This was an exciting time for Josephine and she would develop some of her closest friendships over the following years.

Josephine's role began with the inaugural event of the men's Washington Star International in 1969; a tournament benefiting junior tennis in the Washington area, and in particular inner city youth. Her responsibilities quickly grew from volunteering to manage ball boys and ushers to professional positions in tournament management and securing financial support in the form of sponsorships. By 1980, Josephine would be juggling multiple annual events; the Washington Star, the Volvo Classic, and the Colgate Series.

Following the death of her husband Laurence, Josephine began volunteering for a local charitable organization and immersed herself in a full-time career in the sports management industry. Eventually, she accepted a position with ProServ, Inc. as part of a team that helped run professional tennis events across the country. A yearly event in Stowe, Vermont was one of her favorite tournaments and she would invite her family there to enjoy a vacation during her stay. Josephine left Proserv as assistant vice-president, began working at Net Assets, and was instrumental in the creation of the first major senior men's circuit in 1993 featuring Jimmy Connors and Bjorn Borg.

Josephine retired from her career in tennis and sports management and in 2002, moved back to Austin to be near her youngest son Joe, his wife Robbie, and her eldest son Randy. While Josephine would miss being near her son Fred and daughter-in-law Devora, as well as the many friendships and social activities in Washington, this move allowed her to reconnect with old friends she made while attending Austin High, The University of Texas, and while working for Lyndon and Ladybird Johnson.

Always active, Josephine was never content to spend her days at home reading her New York Times. She volunteered for the Loaves and Fishes program at All Saints Church, became a docent at the University of Texas Harry Ransom Center, and a frequent participant in the University of Texas British Studies program. Josephine was a fiercely political woman who loved kitty-cats, formal gardens, high-tea with friends, red wine, the evening network news, Leonard Cohen & the Bee Gees, road trips with her sons and daughters-in-law, Pre-Raphaelite art & literature, day lilies, Novak Djokovic tennis matches, the theater, going to the movies, picnics, hotdogs with mustard, and wearing her signature pith helmet.

Josephine is preceded in death by her parents Frederick and Irene Couch, her husband Laurence P Sherfy, and her brothers Robert, Britain, and Frederick Couch. She is survived by her three sons, Laurence Randolph Sherfy, Frederick Crouch Sherfy, Joseph Polkinhorn Sherfy and daughters-in-law Roberta Sherfy and Devora Chapman Sherfy. She is also survived by her grandchildren; Justin Randolph Sherfy and Keenan Matthew Sherfy, and great grandchildren; William, Patrick, Ethan, Grant, and Dean.

Josephine also leaves behind nieces Jennifer Crouch Ellis, Alyson Crouch Hardin, Kimberly Crouch, Janelle Straszheim, Kate Rogers, Elizabeth Sherfy, and many friends who enriched her life, shared happiness and sorrows,

influenced her, admired her, and helped this remarkable woman show us all how one might live a life of curiosity, responsibility, and consequence.

Josephine's ashes will be interred next to her husband's, Laurence Polkinhorn Sherfy, in the memorial garden at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Bethesda, Maryland at a future date not yet determined.

DONATION NOTICE

Josephine was a committed advocate for those less fortunate. To donate to organizations Josephine personally supported financially and through volunteer efforts, we suggest two places:

Bethesda Cares in Bethesda, Maryland. Phone Donations: 301-907-9244, or at
<https://bethesdacares.networkforgood.com/projects/20363-support-bethesda-cares>

All Saints' Episcopal Church - Loaves & Fishes Program
209 W. 27th Street
Austin, TX 78705

You can donate by going to <http://allsaints-austin.org> and clicking on the "GIVE" tab on the upper right part of the page. Select "Loaves & Fishes" on the drop-down FUND menu. Please leave a note in the memo section the donation is in memory of Josephine Sherfy.

You can also donate by mail. Simply sent a check to All Saints' with "Loaves & Fishes" on the memo line. If you include: "Josephine Sherfy," with the donation, a volunteer will send the family a note that a donation has been made in Josephine's memory.

Cemetery Details

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Memorial Garden

6030 Grosvenor Ln.
Bethesda, MD 20814
<https://www.stlukesbethesda.org/>

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall



“ *Josephine Sherfy*

October 14, 2022 at 12:02 PM



“ *My love for Josephine will never end. I'll take it with me to the other side where I hope we are able to meet for tea, as I know the line of people waiting and hoping to reunite with her will wrap around the heavens.*

Christine Reinauer - December 09, 2021 at 01:53 PM



“ *Our sincere condolence to Joe and family.
We always remember our fond conversations with Josephine.*

Susan and Phuc Nguyen

Phuc Nguyen - December 08, 2021 at 04:44 PM



“ *An amazing woman who supported do many of us. She was a mentor, a supporter and most of all a friend. Lucky to have known Josie and call her friend. You will be missed.*

Jeannie - December 05, 2021 at 04:14 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories*



Austin Natural Funerals - December 03, 2021 at 11:10 AM



“ 16 files added to the album *Memories*



Austin Natural Funerals - December 02, 2021 at 05:08 PM