



Mary Waldron Smith

November 27, 1923 - February 27, 2023

Rye - Mary Waldron Smith, of Rye, passed away peacefully at home on Monday, February 27, 2023. She was the beloved wife of the late Major Arthur T. Smith, who passed away in 2011.

Born in Stutterheim, Eastern Cape, South Africa, on November 27, 1923, Mary was the daughter of the late Edward Rupert Harris Thornhill and Hilda Blanche (Eddie) Thornhill. Raised and educated in Devon, England, Mary attended Secondary School and went on to work for Barclay's Bank in Exeter, Devon as part of the civilian effort in World War II in Great Britain. It was during this period that Mary met Arthur while he was stationed in England with the U.S. Army. They began their lifelong companionship and were married on June 2, 1944, in Ashford, Kent, just prior to the allied invasion of Normandy.

After the war, the couple moved to Cambridge, MA where Arthur attended college at Harvard. After his graduation, Mary and Arthur moved to the Philadelphia area where they settled and began raising their family. In 1952 Arthur was called back to active duty for the Korean War. Mary and Arthur had three sons during the 1950's, and in 1961 Arthur took a position with the American Academy of Family Physicians in Kansas City, MO. Mary and Arthur remained in the Kansas City area until Arthur's retirement in 1984. While living in the Midwest, Mary raised the family and then pursued her occupation as manager of a retail store specializing in tropical fish for hobbyists, and she

won several awards for her expertise in raising and caring for fish and aquariums.

After moving to Rye in 1984, Mary had a tremendously positive impact on the Seacoast community and the regional heritage. She served as a tour guide and caretaker of the Celia Thaxter Garden on Appledore Island with the Shoals Marine Laboratory. She volunteered her time helping visitors at Fuller Garden in North Hampton and was active with the Rye Driftwood Garden Club for many years.

Mary spent many Thursday mornings hosting the “Knitting with Mary” group at Rye Public Library. She managed to share the knitting skills she gained in her youth with all who were interested.

Mary’s greatest joys in life were her family, along with music, poetry, and art. She and Arthur enjoyed traveling, and they were well-known members of St. Theresa’s Parish in Rye Beach for many years.

Mary is survived by her children, David W. Smith of Racine, WI, Michael G. Smith of Greenland, NH, and Kevin T. Smith and his wife Michelle Cachon-Negrete of Portland, ME.

A committal ceremony will be held privately, and Mary will be laid to rest beside Arthur in Central Cemetery in Rye. Her funeral Mass will be held at St. Theresa Church in Rye at a date and time to be announced. All are welcome to attend.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Mary’s memory to the New Hampshire SPCA in Stratham by clicking here (<https://nhspca.org/>)

or by mail to:

New Hampshire SPCA,
104 Portsmouth Avenue
Stratham, NH. 03885

Tribute Wall

JG

“ I am saddened to learn of Mary Smith's passing. Mary and I shared the same birthday month and date. She was such a pleasant and friendly person. I will miss her. She and I had met and were very active at one time in the Rye Garden Club. She will be missed by all who knew her. Rest in Peace, Mary.

Jackie Gacek - March 13, 2023 at 01:49 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Waldron Smith.



March 09, 2023 at 11:10 PM

JM

“ I joined Mary's Knitting at the Rye Library and meet sweet Mary. She taught me her "Strong Heeled Sock" pattern and I think I'm on pair 45! We grew into such a beautiful friendship. My best times were riding in the MGB to all the different towns weekly summer concerts and knitting. We hopped a bus and went to a Red Sox game at Fenway...she loved her team! Another fun trip was to the Ogunquit Playhouse to see "South Pacific".... She loved all kinds of music!! She'll be in my heart forever.

Judi Morris - March 09, 2023 at 07:45 AM

KB

“ I was so lucky to spend time with Mary and I am so much better for it. I was knitting at an Isles of Shoals Historical Research (ISHRA) Meeting when the lovely Mary greeted me with " How lovely to see another knitter". I was at the Rye Library "Knitting with Mary" the following week. Thanks to the reserved spot on the couch next to Mary for extra help, I would later earn a Deerfield Fair "Best in Show" ribbon with Mary's British Guernsey Fisherman's Sweater pattern, an absolute "minor miracle". That was all Mary. I just did what I was told and shown several times how to do it right. My husband commented on my "knitting backwards" as I would reverse my work stitch by stitch to be safe. Mary's sock pattern are the only socks my family will now wear. We had so many wonderful conversations and travels to lunch after knitting. I went with Mary to then Gov Maggie Hassan's ceremony to answer the freedom petition of the early Portsmouth slaves. Her intelligence, her style, her love of jazz, gardening to name a few of her contributions will continue to inspire me. One simply can not forget Mary! God bless and keep her.

Kate Bashline - March 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM

GP

“ We will miss seeing Mary here at Rye Public Library...she was always so gracious and kind to everyone, and a lovely presence at the Knitting with Mary group. Our deepest condolences to her family...The staff at Rye Public Library

Gwen Putnam-Bailey - March 06, 2023 at 04:17 PM

JC

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jim Cerny - March 04, 2023 at 10:49 PM

CR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Chris & Karen Robarge - March 04, 2023 at 01:14 PM

GL

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Glen - March 04, 2023 at 01:11 PM

KG

I love this picture. it's pure Mary.

Kendra Gemmett - March 17, 2023 at 01:56 PM