



Annie Joe Berkowitz

March 20, 1935 - October 18, 2019

Annie Joe Horn Denney Berkowitz was born in the Roscoe community of Coweta County on March 20, 1935. She was one of seven children born to the late Wayne and Vada Cole Horn. In addition to her parents, Annie Joe was preceded in death by her siblings, Clara Elizabeth Horn, Buddy Lewis Horn, Priscilla Cole West, Edward Lewis Horn and William Hoffman "Lil'Brother" Horn. Annie Joe was born with the heart and soul of a servant. Though diminutive in size, no mountain was large enough that she would not tackle the job of moving it if it needed to be moved. This incredible servant spirit was ignited for all times by the birth of her daughter Geran Clare Denney on March 6, 1957. Geran was born with multiple handicaps and disabilities. For many, the challenge of raising a child with so many needs could be overwhelming. Annie knew that if Geran was to have a good quality of life, she would have to be her advocate because any programs for children were extremely limited and enrichment programs simply did not exist. Consequently, Annie Joe was instrumental in the founding of The Open Door School in Newnan that would eventually become The Rutledge Center. This center would allow those with limited mental and physical skills to learn to function to the best of their abilities and to also educate their community to the fact that some, despite their disabilities, did possess marketable skills for employment. From her experience with The Rutledge Center, Annie Joe would facilitate the opening of seven additional centers in the southeast United States. As her commitment expanded, she became involved politically. This would lead to her

association with Rosalyn Carter and Governor Jimmy Carter. Mrs. Carter shared Annie Joe's passion for expanding the opportunities for those with mental health and mental development issues. Annie Joe's advocacy was noted by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of President Kennedy. Mrs. Shriver appointed Annie Joe to head The Kennedy Foundation of Special Olympics. Annie Joe would travel internationally to enable countries over the world to establish their own Special Olympics programs. It was also in her years in Washington, DC, that she would enjoy some success as a real estate agent. In 1997, she returned to Newnan and embraced her community and immediately immersed herself in her spirit of volunteerism. Annie Joe was a miracle survivor of breast cancer. She immediately realized that cancer patients could benefit by networking with others who were likewise challenged. From this sprang The Cancer Support Group that is active to this date. As the Relay for Life was organized, she became a volunteer and enthusiastically supported it for many years. Ralph Waldo Emerson penned these words, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us". Annie Joe firmly believed that it was her calling in life to help those who could not help themselves. Those who loved her dearly often were concerned that Annie Joe spent so much of her energy in doing for others that she did not spend enough time caring for herself. Annie Joe thrived on her dedication to her causes and felt that the God she served would give her the strength for today and continued bright hope for tomorrow. In all that she did, she gave the God who created her all the glory. In 2010, her community felt that it was time for her to be recognized for her life of incredible accomplishment in the service of others. She was awarded The Citizen of the Year and humbly accepted it, all the while thanking the others who had been instrumental in helping her accomplish so much to benefit her causes. These last years of Annie Joe's life have forced her world to become smaller as she dealt with the diagnosis of Alzheimer's. Throughout the last years, however, love still dominated her life. She was involved with a music therapy program offered to her in her assisted living home and Annie Joe

would be right there beside the facilitators singing, playing the tambourine and encouraging the other residents to join in – all the while her face was awash in her beautiful smile and eyes that danced in excitement. As she exhibited in everything she did in her life, an encounter with Annie Joe would let you walk away, buoyed by the feeling that surely one had been in the presence of an angel on earth. The hymnist's words speak to such a spirit. "Love one another as Jesus loves you,

try to show kindness in all that you do. Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought, for these are the things Jesus taught." On October 18, 2019, God gently whispered to Annie Joe, "Well done, my good and faithful servant...". Annie Joe is survived by her sister, Pauline Harris and her niece Jill Helton. There is a large extended family of nieces, nephews, cousins and countless friends she loved as family. Tiffany Garrett and Janice Parks had been God sent as her caregivers during the last part of her life. A service to honor the life of this wonderful woman will be planned for the near future as soon as other family illnesses will allow. Those who might wish to honor Annie Joe's life might do so by a gift to The Alzheimer's Association or to The Rutledge Center in Newnan. Online condolences may be expressed at www.mckoon.com. McKoon Funeral Home 770-253-4580.

Tribute Wall



“ *What an amazing lady. She was the full embodiment of Jesus with skin on. She put others before herself. She gave to so many of us and never complained. What a sweet soul.* ”



Samantha Wood - November 14, 2019 at 10:13 AM



“ *Billie Cloudsdale lit a candle in memory of Annie Joe Berkowitz* ”



Billie Cloudsdale - October 25, 2019 at 03:08 PM



What an amazing lady! Always putting others before herself. She has left many legacies, two in particular that I have become associated with because of Annie Joe. The Cancer Support group of Coweta County and The Relay For Life. She touched so many lives including mine. Never to be forgotten. My sincere condolences to her family. Billie

Billie Cloudsdale - October 25, 2019 at 03:24 PM



“ *Geneva Favors sent a virtual gift in memory of Annie Joe Berkowitz* ”



Geneva Favors - October 25, 2019 at 09:28 AM

TB

“ *Trellis Brown lit a candle in memory of Annie Joe Berkowitz*



Trellis Brown - October 24, 2019 at 09:18 PM

JR

“ *My sincere condolences to the family. Annie Joe was a God sent friend to my grandmother, Katherine Ford. I will never forget her and what she meant to my family. Annie Joe was truly an Angel on earth. ❤️*



Jennifer Rice - October 24, 2019 at 02:33 PM

BW

“ *What a exemplary life Mrs. Berkowitz lived! May she Rest In Peace.*



Bobby and Geraldine Welch - October 24, 2019 at 08:12 AM

LR

“ *She was definitely a wonderful, selfless lady. I'm sure she's enjoying a heavenly home now. My sympathies to her family.*

Lissa Rand - October 23, 2019 at 06:14 PM

MS

“ *The world lost a very special Angel. Her obituary said it all. RIP Mrs. Annie Jo. You are loved by SO,SO many, and will be missed by everyone. All of the family and friends will be in my thoughts and prayers. Love to all of you.*

Maryann Shelnutt - October 23, 2019 at 11:10 AM

LD

“ *Pauline, I was so sorry to hear of Annie Joes death. Ever who wrote her obit. did a great job. I had heard that she was in bad shape. Our memories go back so many years, hadn't seen her in a while. I remember when Kenneth and I married, some of the good times we all had together. I can see her and Kenneth in heaven, having a very good time! Prayers for you and your family.*

Linda M Denney - October 23, 2019 at 10:17 AM