



Virginia Johnston

September 9, 2007

Virginia Johnston of St. Michaels, MD died peacefully on Sunday, September 9, 2007 at Genesis Health Care - The Pines in Easton, MD where she had been in residence since last year.

Virginia Thomas was born in 1916 in Natick, Massachusetts, where she spent her early years. She worked at MIT in Cambridge in the early part of World War II, before joining the American Red Cross and being posted to England. Virginia came ashore at Normandy in France a few weeks after the Allied landings on D-Day, and traveled with the American army into Paris, and later to Germany.

Following the victory in Europe, Virginia went to Washington DC, where she worked for Gen. Jimmy Doolittle and then became the executive secretary to the first director of the newly-formed Central Intelligence Agency. During her time in Washington, she met S. Paul Johnston, a former Navy Captain, and a leading expert on flight and aviation. They were married in 1956, and moved to Princeton, NJ where Paul commuted to his job in New York as the Executive Director of the Rocket Society, later to become the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. When Paul was appointed as the first Director of the Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian, they returned to Washington where Virginia continued to pursue her lifelong interest in the arts and culture, serving as a docent at the Corcoran Gallery and a member of the Cosmos Club.

After her husband's retirement from the Smithsonian, Virginia and Paul moved to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, an area that they both held very dear. Paul became the Director of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, and Virginia was extremely active in the community, was a member of The Harbor Club and the Easton Country Club and organized and led art tours to the Washington museums and other art and cultural institutions. Virginia was always a woman of great energy and strong opinions, particularly about politics and public affairs. An avid traveler, she made many trips to Europe after the war both with Paul and by herself after his passing. Virginia continued to play golf enthusiastically into her 80's, and carefully followed the public

events of our times.

Virginia is remembered with great love and admiration by her many friends and her family, particularly by her niece Barbara Johnston Berkenfield of New Mexico, her cousin Ned Daniels of Massachusetts, and her daughters by marriage Mary Carol Ballard of California and Pierrette Collon of Lyon, France. She will be missed by all, and her memory cherished as a friend, an indomitable spirit and a remarkable participant in some of the great historic events and times of this country.

In keeping with her wishes, no funeral service or memorial will be held. Virginia Johnston will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers or other expressions of condolence, gifts may be made in Virginia's memory to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Inc. PO Box 636 St. Michaels, MD 21663.

Arrangements are by Fellows, Helfenbein and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A., Easton, MD.

Tribute Wall



“ *Virginia Johnston*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Virginia Johnston*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Virginia Johnston*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM