Cornelia Parsly Walton

Cornelia “Cornie” Parsly Walton, 87, died peacefully at Cathedral Village, Roxborough, PA on June 26, 2020 with John Walton, her best friend and beloved husband of 65 years, by her side. Cornie, the daughter of Lewis Fuller Parsly and Hester Anderson Parsly, was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Chestnut Hill with her brothers Lew, Andy, John and her twin, Jim Parsly. She graduated from the Springside School in 1950 and earned her nursing degree from the Pennsylvania Hospital School of Nursing in 1953. She was a surgical Operating Room nurse at the hospital until 1957.

Cornie and John were married in 1955 and built homes in Ambler, PA and later, Spring House, PA, where they raised their three daughters – Betsy Duryea (Dick), Cindy Stauffer (Larry), and Frida Walton. They were loving members of the “Bastville” and “Wood Bridge Meadow” communities and they and their daughters were fortunate to build lifelong relationships with those neighborhood friends. Cornie fell in love with Beach Haven, NJ where John’s family had bought a house in 1927. They have been very active members of Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club, where John is a Past Commodore. Cornie enjoyed sailing, helping to run races on the bay, dancing with John to great band music on Saturday nights under the stars, spending time on the beach, and she cherished their big group of fabulous friends who are really more like family.

After raising her children, Cornie returned to nursing and joined the staff in the Surgi-Center at Chestnut Hill Hospital when it first opened. She adored her co-workers and felt so fortunate to be a member of that wonderful team. Cornie and John moved to Cathedral Village retirement community 18 years ago and have thrived there. She was involved with many garden and landscape projects around the campus, including a winter garden program, relocating residents’ outdoor plants into the hallways and indoor spaces and organizing volunteers to tend for them. Cornie was a member of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Chestnut Hill where she served on the Vestry, the Pastoral Care Team and the Lay Weeders. She was a compassionate volunteer with Wissahickon Hospice and a member of the Craft Show Committee of the Highlands Historical Society.

If you were looking for Cornie, you would most often find her in the garden - any garden - digging in the dirt and making the world a more beautiful place. She loved to plant, weed, prune and tend to her own gardens along with many others. Through the Philadelphia Committee of the Garden Club of America, Cornie spent years organizing a large group of volunteers to care for the beautiful Physic Garden at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. Cornie was a graduate of the Arboretum School of the Barnes Foundation and was an award-winning exhibitor, and passionate volunteer, at the Philadelphia Flower Show. She was a very active and beloved member of the Wissahickon Garden Club. Cornie mentored younger members and enjoyed working on civic garden projects, both in the City of Philadelphia and the suburbs.

Cornie loved to draw and paint, take photographs, do needlepoint, hunt for seashells in Sanibel, FL and write unique and clever poems to celebrate every occasion with friends. She and John built a beautiful life together with family, community and connection as it’s foundation.

Cornie is survived by her husband John, her three daughters, her grandchildren Peter Duryea (Victoria), Tracy Duryea, Jonathan Stauffer, Emily Stauffer, and Megan Stauffer, her twin brother Jim Parsly, and her sister-in-law and dear friend, Joly Walton Stewart.

The family will hold a private burial and invite family and friends to celebrate Cornie’s beautiful life when it is safe to gather again.

Friends are invited to make memorial contributions in Cornie’s name to the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 8000 St. Martins Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118.