



Joan Barry Cook

February 9, 1925 - April 26, 2013

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Joan Barry Cook, 88, died Friday, in St. Augustine, FL, surrounded by her family. She was a native of New Orleans and her burial will take place there Saturday at St. Louis Cemetery #1, where generations of her family have been buried. A memorial mass in her honor will be held at St. Anastasia Catholic Church in Crescent Beach at a time to be announced. Ms. Cook was born on Feb. 9, 1925, in New Orleans, La. She was raised in Chattanooga, TN, where she graduated from Notre Dame High School. She also graduated from Sullins College, in Virginia and attended the University of Chattanooga. She married in Seattle Washington, but used her maiden name, Barry, as her professional name throughout her career. In Chattanooga she was a pioneer for women, becoming the first woman to work in advertising sales for radio, beginning in 1952; and a decade later becoming the first woman in advertising sales for television. In the 1950s she became the first woman on radio in Chattanooga, hosting a program called "At Home with Joan." Moving into television in the 1960s, she became a local celebrity and controversial member of a talk show panel of four. She was the only woman. One of her finest moments was when she was the single host of Bulletin and interviewed Lester Maddox, the infamous segregationist from Atlanta who was running for governor of Georgia. He had agreed to appear on the show only on the condition that segregation not be mentioned. But Ms. Barry refused to ignore

that singularly significant topic. When she asked him directly about his segregationist activities, he stormed off the show. The confrontation made headlines in Atlanta, and left the interviewer to fill the air time on her own. This was little trouble for the articulate, opinionated and stage-savvy Joan Barry. While in Chattanooga, Ms. Cook was a regular star of Little Theater productions, filling the house for such blockbusters as Auntie Mame. She was a lover of theater and opera, and her appetite for the arts was well satisfied when she moved to New York City in 1972. In the Big Apple, Ms. Cook built a new career beginning at the age of 47. For 18 years she was North American advertising manager for the Far Eastern Economic Review. Published by Dow Jones, the Review was a weekly global magazine with its primary circulation in Asia. In the course of her work Ms. Cook traveled throughout the United States and frequently in the Far East, visiting Hong Kong and Tokyo at least once a year, as well as such other exotic locales as Singapore and Bangkok. She retired in 1992 and moved to be near her family in Crescent Beach, FL., where she lived for 20 years. She loved Paris and spent summer months there for many years. Throughout her life she was known for her attention to fashion and style. She was known for her affinity for purple and was always, as they say, "dressed to the nines." Ms. Barry-Cook was a staunch advocate of the Alcoholics Anonymous program in St. Augustine and a friend to anyone who needed its assistance. She was a former board member for the Limelight Theater. She was a member of St. Anastasia Catholic Church. She is survived by three children: Madeleine Tidball of Beeville, TX; J. Brian Cook of Chattanooga, TN, and Crescent Beach, FL., and Stephanie Cook, of Chattanooga and Crescent Beach; eight grandchildren: Jane Ziolkowski of Palm Coast, FL., Stephanie Cook Brice, St. Augustine, FL, Maria Cook, Bradenton, FL, Monica Stalker of Greenville, S.C.; Laurie Dugan of Tuleta, TX; Michael Cody of San Marcos, TX; Daniel Cody of Santa Monica, CA, and Andy Parton of McMinnville, Tn.; seven great-grandchildren: John Brian Brice of St. Augustine, FL; Jessica Lapp of Boynton Beach, FL; Carissa Klug of Greenville, S.C.; Hannah Hicks, Ashley Townsend, Autumn and Allison Parton

and Marcie Boone; two great-great-grandchildren: Emma Grace and Christian Curtis. Ms. Barry-Cook will also be sorely missed by her many friends here and abroad. In lieu of flowers, those who wish may send memorial contributions to Community Hospice, the Bailey Center for Caring, in St. Augustine. St. Johns Family Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.