

Marjorie Scott Blodgett

13 November 1935 - 22 January 2026

Marjorie has died peacefully from complications associated with dementia.

The only child of Wayne and Edna (Hegewald) Scott, she was born in Wyoming and grew up in Denver, Colorado. She attended Colorado State, receiving a degree in bacteriology. Her next stop was New York City, where she worked at Sloan Kettering during the day and enjoyed musical and theatrical venues in the evenings.



A short-lived marriage to H. Bruce Linn took her to Cleveland, Ohio, where she subsequently met John Blodgett, a Public Policy student attending graduate school at Case Institute of Technology.

John and Marjorie married 1 November 1969. (John sold a pint of blood for \$25 at the Cleveland Clinic to cover the cost of the license.) When John accepted a job at the Library of

Congress in 1970, they moved to Washington D.C. There they enjoyed conjoining their homemaking preferences and taking in the cultural offerings in D.C., Baltimore, and New York City.

Feeling cramped on a suburban lot in Silver Spring, Maryland, in 1977 they bought 27 acres on Catoctin Ridge near Jefferson, Maryland.



About two-thirds of the acreage was wooded, with the remainder being seriously degraded pasture. They jointly began the process of transforming it to their combined home and retreat.

It was a joint effort all the way. Upon selecting the homesite, they immediately proceeded to plant to the northwest a windbreak of 500 white pine trees.



Marjorie carried a bucket of 8- to 12-inch seedlings; as John levered a slit in the ground with a spade, she would slide the roots of a seedling into the slot. Then, stomp it in, move two paces, and repeat. Tiring, but hugely successful.

They designed the house for comfort, energy efficiency, and practicality. Marjorie specified a sewing room, John a shop. Both demanded a library. A builder constructed the basic house, but John and Marjorie did much of the finish work, including building and installing cabinets; doing door, window, and baseboard trim; and painting and staining. Four hands made it go. Having received an occupancy permit, they moved into the mostly-finished house over Presidents' Day Holiday weekend, 1981.

Marjorie thrived. Her interests and skills blossomed in the kitchen, in the greenhouse and garden, and in the sewing room.

As a cook, Marjorie had been enthralled by Julia Child's TV Cooking Show. Marjorie was a skillful, adventurous cook. For her, a recipe was an inspiration, not an immutable specification. Julia Child had introduced her to French cooking, but she was attracted also to Italian and Asian cuisines. Disdaining commercial bread, she baked bread regularly, until dementia fouled her mind. Besides her preferred everyday bread that blended unbleached white and whole wheat flours, she frequently produced varied artisanal breads such as rosemary-raisin. Her focaccia toppings featured diverse condiments and personal selections from the herbs she grew. Sunday breakfasts were a joint affair: she made pancake batter (besides the expected egg, flour, milk, and baking powder, her recipe included melted butter and sour cream) and cooked the dollar-sized cakes on the griddle; meanwhile, John gently fried bacon and two eggs (and in summer picked two sprigs of mint to garnish the glasses of orange juice).

Under Marjorie's care the greenhouse became a jungle—ferns, orchids, jasmine, cacti, a fig tree and rubber plants, Cuban oregano, geraniums, African violets ...—and her relaxing spot. Most days—virtually all sunny ones—she would make a pot of tea and sit and read in the greenhouse. The greenhouse also served as a way station for garden-bound flowers and vegetables. In late winter and early spring she started from seed hundreds of plants, from alliums (onions, leeks) to zucchini and zinnias. Tomatoes were a specialty; in a typical year she would start perhaps 20 different varieties totaling over 100 seedlings, which she shared with friends and neighbors. She loved the garden and its produce.



The sewing room was Marjorie's "room of one's own." It had two closets, primarily for fabrics; a counter for the sewing machine, with two sets of drawers underneath for supplies; a cutting table; two large bookshelves; and



a CD player (that we had won by entering a question chosen for the Metropolitan Opera's intermission quiz during a Saturday afternoon broadcast). Just as with cooking, where Marjorie saw recipes as guides, in sewing she viewed patterns as starting points. Her sewing encompassed mending; making new garments—pants, dresses, shirts, pajamas/nightgowns, jackets—mostly for herself, but some for John; and, especially, quilting.



Also, she did cross stitch, crewel, and knitting. She loved fabrics, attuned to color, pattern, design, and feel. She amassed hundreds (thousands?) of pieces of fabric, and to

show them off she produced dozens of neckties, a hundred or more napkins, and several hundred pieced quilts and wall hangings. Many of the quilts were gifted and many more donated through churches in areas suffering natural disasters, including Fargo and New Orleans.



Diminished cooking and quilting were two early manifestations of Marjorie's emerging dementia. Then she began putting down books, complaining that she couldn't follow the narrative nor keep the characters straight, even in novels she had read earlier. And so it progressed. Her last few years and days were difficult but largely pain-free. She had moments when she wished it were over, that she "could go to sleep and not not wake," and other moments when she wished she "could be well again." For the last 18 months Hospice supplied a hospital bed, medications, and unlimited wipes and briefs, plus its nurse Tina's understanding and guidance. This, combined with the continuous ministrations of her full-time, live-in caregiver Nana, allowed Marjorie to pass her last year and a half without a UTI nor a bedsore.





Marjorie & John



Marjorie's favorite quilt covered her the final days

Lemon Pudding

Adapted by Marjorie from Shirley Sarvis,
Table for Two (1968), p.72

1 T butter
1/4 cup sugar
1 lemon, juice & zested rind
1 egg, separated
1 T flour

Blend the egg yolk and all ingredients except the egg white

Beat egg white and fold in

Bake in oiled dish set in water bath, at 350 for 40-45
minutes

Enjoy

Marjorie
at
90

