

**JOANNE C. BROWN
DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR
FOUNDERS DAY
SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP
2008**

*Don't follow where your path may lead.
Instead, make your own way and leave a path.*
Anonymous

Joanne Campbell Brown, also known as “JO”, was born in Phoenixville Hospital and has lived in Schuylkill Township her whole life with the exception of her early years of marriage in Philadelphia and Uniontown, PA. Joanne and her family returned to Schuylkill Township in 1958, and in 1959 they purchased the original 1870 Schuylkill School (adaptively re-used as a private residence) where she still lives today.

As a young student, Joanne was one of the first to attend the “new” and consolidated Schuylkill School built in 1932 that put an end to the era of one-room and two-room schoolhouses in the area. Her class was the first class to attend all 8 grades. She graduated from Phoenixville High School in 1943 and was the valedictorian of her class.

Joanne attended Penn State University (where tuition was then FREE) from 1943 to 1946 where she majored in Microbiology and met her husband. Upon graduation she worked at the University of Pennsylvania doing research.

Joanne married Frank E. Brown, Jr., in 1948. The late Dr. Brown was a pediatrician in Phoenixville for many years. She and “Bud” had 4 children: Mimi, Scott and twins Peter and Bob. She also has 6 grandchildren.

Joanne’s roots in Schuylkill Township go deep. In 1928, her parents and paternal grandparents (the Campbells) purchased Meadow Brook Farm. They acquired it from Joanne’s maternal great-grandmother, Hettie Yerkes Hallowell, a Quaker woman who had owned and operated it as a farm with her family since 1896. During the 1920’s, the Campbell’s began to develop the farm into a residential community known as Meadow Brook Place, the first of its kind in Schuylkill Township. About the same time, they developed a portion of the farm into a miniature golf course, chip and put course and tennis courts. With the arrival of the Great Depression and a stagnant real estate market, the remaining land was developed into a 9-hole golf course, which it remains today.

In the mid-1970’s, Joanne worked with Estelle Cremers to research Meadow Brook’s history and have it placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Meadow Brook was built by Moses Coates, Jr., who eventually left the area and settled what is the present-day City of Coatesville. Meadow Brook also served Benedict Arnold and Washington’s Army during the encampment at Valley Forge. (For more information

about Meadow Brook go to RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR PAST...RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FUTURE at www.Schuylkilltwp.org)

During the 1980's, Joanne worked with Jane Davidson, then Historic Preservation Officer of Chester County, to inventory properties in the Borough of Phoenixville and create the Phoenixville Historic District. About the same time, she also worked with Estelle Cremers and the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, to create an inventory of historic properties in Schuylkill Township, which in 1981, became Schuylkill Township's first Historic Resource List.

A charter member of the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area since the mid-1970's, Joanne served as President during the 1990's and has been volunteering approximately 2 days per week during many of the past 10 years.

Joanne has been an active member of the Phoenixville Hospital Auxiliary since the 1960's. Friends recall pushing carts with her through the old hospital facility and working at the "new" snack bar. She is also an active member of the Horseshoe Trail Questers.

In addition to being an accomplished golfer, with an incredibly straight shot, and a formidable Bridge player, Joanne also knits, sews, crochets and since the 1970's has been a quilter. She is an active member of several quilting guilds and has been working with the Chester County Historical Society for several years to help document Chester County quilts for their archives and for publication.

Joanne is a collector of many things, including quilts, stamps, coins, antiques, and Phoenixville's Etruscan majolica, and she is active in various local historical organizations, attending as many lectures and workshops as she can and keeping current on as much preservation and history as she can. Since its formation in 2003, Joanne has been an active member of the Historical Commission in Schuylkill Township.

Important to her has been her Board membership and support to the Friends of Schuylkill School. Having been one who was in the first class to attend all eight grades at the school, she has been a major player in working to protect the historic structure from demolition.

Having done some traveling, including summers in Canada, Joanne has always said that she is incredibly fortunate to live in Chester County, which she believes to be one of the most beautiful and wonderful areas of the country. No matter where she goes, her family reports that she is always happy, content and eager to return to Schuylkill Township – a region whose history, heritage and people she cherishes.