



Betty Mariea Johnnie

July 22, 1955 - May 13, 2021

Betty (T'awS'ot) Mariea Johnnie

Betty Mariea Johnnie was born July 22, 1955, to Bert Adam Johnnie, Sr. and Florence Kathryn Cush. She was born at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Bellingham, Washington. Betty's paternal grandparents were the late Jack Johnny and Maria (Johnson) Johnny both of the Spa'al'eXen village site of the Nooksack tribe. Her maternal grandparents were the late Daniel Edward Cush, Sr. and Justina (Jack) Cush of the Lummi Reservation.

Betty's middle name of "Maria" is a namesake of her paternal grandmother "Maria" Johnny of the Nooksack Tribe. The older generation acquired the English surname of "Johnny" from the Homesteading era. They spelled the surname with a "y" and during the WWII era they changed her father's surname from Johnny to Johnnie along with his younger brothers who served in the armed forces.

Betty acquired her paternal grandmother's ancestral name of "T'awS'ot" pronounced T'ahSaut and is a Nooksack ancestral name affiliated with the "Spa'aL'eX'en" village site that now lies in which is called the Goshen area. Spa'aL'eXen literally means open field or prairie which where a longhouse was established.

Betty went to public schools like Roeder, Ferndale, Harmony and Acme elementary schools. Mount Baker, Ferndale and Bellingham Middle and High Schools. She completed her GED with the Nooksack Education Program. She attended and completed Lummi two-year apprentice Carpentry school. Later attended the Lummi Community College which later became the Northwest Indian College.

Betty enjoyed hunting and fishing with her brothers. Brother Scott remembers her asking our dad to bring her hunting. He finally gave in and took her deer hunting. She did a perfect head shot and killed that buck. He taught her to gut, hang, skin, and butcher her first deer and give it away. Scott says she was a better hunter than him. Of course, she always just winked at him when he said that as if it was not true.

Betty enjoyed Indian beading, learning cedar bark weaving from her mother Florence. She enjoyed block printing and did several pieces that became give-away items for family gatherings and cultural events. She had one piece depicting her maternal great grandmother that was displayed in the Lummi Community Colleges art fair. She was proud of her accomplishment.

Betty was always had an inner strength about her. She always stepped up to physical challenges which she saw as an opportunity of endurance. When we lived at our Grandparents house on Roberts Road, we had no electricity and running water. As household chores were assigned both Betty and Scott had been given the chore of getting water.

Therefore, we use to have to carry water from the spring well about ¼ mile from the house in milk cans. She always filled her milk can up to the brim and literally carry it all the way to the house without stopping and come back and help her brother Scott and carry his from wherever he was located at. When our dad had us boy's getting firewood for the winter. Betty always jumped in

and carried the firewood blocks and always tried to get the bigger and heavier blocks. We used to get cedar shakes from the river, and we carried wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow to the car and fill the trunk up and do it again until we got all the shakes done. She loved going to Swede Tom's apple orchard and pick the russet apples (her favorite). The kings, banana, transparencies, and gravenstein apples we would get enough for pies and applesauce. Of course, eat our fill at the orchard. Dad always had us get the wooden boxes with the wires which were filled with straw and then he had us put the russet apples inside to keep for the whole winter, it was everyone's favorite. She loved her russet apples baked with brown sugar.

Every night Betty would seat herself at the dining table with a kerosene lamp and did her schoolwork and always kept up with her assignments. Betty hated washing and drying dishes and always talked Scott in doing the washing part.

She loved playing card games like pinochle and cribbage. She was always good at the adding and subtracting with card numbers. You would hear her loud laughter while playing. Laughing so loud and so much that she would sometimes slobber (a lot) but just kept playing.

Betty was always the first to open conversations with family, other people and even strangers. She always had a kind smile to offer. She loved playing jokes on people (that is a whole story in itself). Her humor side kept people laughing and at times kept her laughing which was all the time. Her past trauma experiences always had her trying to achieve and at times hide that pain by laughter, and her desire to be emotionally, spiritually and physically strong. It had taken its toll and self-medication was the best solution at the time but not always the healthiest.

No shame or blame here. She was a single mother, provided care and love all her family with all she could and was able to. Don't see it as not being enough.... It was genuine and with 100%!

We will all see you again! We will reflect and talk about all the silly, crazy and tough times. We will shed a happy tear, laugh and laugh some more... because we love each other and love you as the mother, sister, and friend.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ *RIP my good friend
We had some great time*

Cathy Ballew - May 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DJ

“ *Many good memories growing up with her while attending Ferndale
School District.
Sending my love and condolences to her family, she will surely be
missed by all that had the opportunity to know her.*

Doris Jefferson - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ *AWW. She was one of my first friends when I first went to work at
Lummi, she was funny and smart.*

Deena Hatten - May 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM