Bernice Marie Kobylanski (Zosiak)

Bernice passed away peacefully with her daughter Diane by her side in the evening of Saturday, July 3rd, 2021, at Berwick House in Victoria, BC. She was 93 years of age. For all of us who loved her, this news is bittersweet as she has been such a presence in many of our lives. Even in her final days as she was declining, Bernice showed her inner strength and powerful spirit while smiling, being positive, and still able to win a game of cards. Although quiet in nature, Bernice was resilient and feisty. Loving, caring, and witty, she always gave us unconditional love and support. She had a heart of gold, was generous and kind, and always gave us so much joy. She was an exceptional example of what family and friendship means and created loving lifelong memories for all of us to remember her by. We miss her dearly and will always think of her when we see a hummingbird.

Born in May 1928 in Poland to Adam and Anna Zosiak, she immigrated with her parents to Pense, Saskatchewan in 1938. As Bernice was fluent in Polish and Ukrainian when arriving to Canada, she attended elementary school at 9 years of age and completed 4 grades in 1 year, not only learning the English language but also excelling in her studies. She travelled daily by train to Regina through her high school years and completed her studies at Balfour Tech. She enjoyed school and literature, wrote stories, and was the recipient of many literary awards. After graduation, she moved to Port Arthur, Ontario and worked as a teacher at a business college for 4 years, teaching Greg and Pittman shorthand and typing.

In 1950, she met the love of her life, Michael Kobylanski at a wedding and they married in August 1951. They were blessed with one daughter, Diane, who brought them so much joy and energy. Bernice was a strong role model to Diane and

encouraged her through her schooling and activities. Bernice was a also wonderful cook and known for her perogies and cabbage rolls. Her kitchen table always had room for the plus one who inevitably showed up unannounced but seemingly always expected and always accepted. She especially loved baking cookies, butter tarts, pies, making jams and jellies, and we can’t forget the jars and jars of pickles.

Bernice enjoyed 28 amazing years of marriage with Mike where they spent time with close friends bowling, playing cards, and had many amazing parties celebrating the people in their lives with delicious food. Family and friends were very important to Bernice. In 1968 her parents moved to Thunder Bay where she took care of them in their elder years until their passing. Unfortunately, Mike died suddenly in 1980 leaving Bernice a widow. Many close friends surrounded her with love and helped her through her grief.

Bernice had a long career in office administration and management, and worked for FH Black, Clarkson and Gordon, and Ernst and Young. She was diligent, meticulous, and strived for perfection in all she did. She loved accounting and if a penny was out on any spreadsheet she would find it! After 25 years of service, she retired from Ernst and Young.

In 1989, Bernice moved to Calgary to be close to her only child, Diane, her favourite (and only) son in-law Dave, and her grandchildren, Allie and Tracy. Living all together, she developed a very special bond with her granddaughters and was there for them after school each day and during school breaks. She adored them, taught them many skills, and was there for them as they grew, proudly supporting their activities, and being present for all those special moments. Bernice was so honoured and proud to give the blessings at Allie and Krzysztof’s wedding in Victoria, and Tracy and Don’s wedding in Hawaii. She loved seeing her family grow, preserving plum jelly with Krzysztof, and especially loved becoming a great grandmother to Oliver, Alexander, and Abigail. She was also

excited and eagerly anticipating the arrival of her fourth great grandchild in late July 2021.

Bernice made an impression on the world no matter where she went and no matter what she did. She always looked youthful, had her hair and makeup done just so, and was always beautifully dressed with jewelry! She enjoyed being with people, socializing with friends, and had a true gift of making everyone feel welcome. She was a confidant, best friend to many and maintained many lifelong friendships until her death.

Her memory was sharp and she took pride on keeping up on current world affairs, watching the news, and always knowing the weather in Thunder Bay, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria. We always said she should have been a meteorologist! She enjoyed bowling, needlepoint, gardening, music, teaching English, singing in the Prosvita's ladies choir, participating church activities, making quilts, planning parties, playing cards especially crib and "Spite and Malice", and travelling. She especially loved visiting Hawaii and enjoyed the beautiful tropical flowers.

Bernice has left a legacy of love, values and many fond memories behind for family and friends to reminisce. We will remember Bernice for her love she blessed us with, the special memories and traditions we created with her, the lessons of life she taught us, the radiant smile she shared with us and the strength and faith she instilled in us. She was an angel on earth and now will be an angel watching us from above.

Bernice has left a legacy of love too extensive to list everyone individually. To her special dear friends who connected with her regularly, she so enjoyed those special conversations! Throughout Bernice's life, she was a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend. She is survived by her daughter Diane Lamsdale (Dave), granddaughters Allie Muniak (Krzysztof) and Tracy Corbett

(Don), and her great grandchildren Oliver, Alexander, Abigail, and a new baby arriving in July. She is predeceased by husband Michael, and parents, Adam and Anna Zosiak. Special thank you to Jan, Rhonda, Lynne, and Bev in Victoria who visited, supported, and played cards with Bernice.

Thank you to the Berwick House staff for their friendship, outstanding care, and support for Bernice in independent living since February 2016 and recently assisted living. She really enjoyed living at Berwick House and often said she wished she had made the decision to move there earlier. She loved all the friendships she made, social events, musical concerts, choir, card games, sequence, Mexican train, bingo and horse races. She especially enjoyed attending her 5-year "Berwick Anniversary" a few weeks before her passing.

Cremation has taken place and a funeral mass will be held at Holy Cross Church in Victoria, BC on September 25th, 2021 at 11am. A Celebration of Life and interment will take place in Thunder Bay at St. Andrew's Church to be announced once COVID restrictions have been lifted.

If you wish, in lieu of flowers, please make a donation in her name to your favourite charity. To share condolences and memories online, please visit below.

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