

Beryl Elsie Chalmers

CHALMERS, Beryl E.

“Amazing Grace ”

Beryl lived life fully and well. As the oldest child of a small town grocer in Saskatchewan during the depression, she knew hardship. Yet, from these years, she would relish stories of good deeds amid adversity. One skate was a treasure and spawned a glorious day when, with her sister, she took one-legged turns gliding on a frozen pond. As a soldier in the British Army in WWII, the “Big One” she called it, Beryl witnessed the deaths of enemy pilots whose bomber planes were blasted from the skies. She was a great soldier, a natural leader. But Beryl was always, beyond all else, a proud, rebellious Canadian whose loyalty to her young country exceeded the tradition of the British uniform. Yes, she took on the army establishment and brazenly demanded to transfer to the Canadian army. When this request was refused because of her rank and experience, she went to jail in protest, ignoring promises of commissions. By the way, she won that battle and shortly, the allies did the same. Like many of her generation, the war defined her, an epic time in her youth that she carried home, with a small suitcase and her army winter coat, to her beloved Saskatchewan.

Beryl fell in love and married Douglas, a farmer near Regina. She became a farm wife but was far from typical. She was an ardent reader, her library featuring the best of classical literature. She read the dog-eared books to her two daughters and often said, “a spoonful of university with a spoonful of Pabulum”. This saying was reinforced by her sister and best friend, Dorothy, who visited often and with whom she created home-made parties and Halloween spectacles for the kids. Beryl’s strong character and convictions impacted life in the small community of Grand Coulee. She loved a good debate and

pushed hard for change. From politics to religion to sex education, she displayed progressive thinking and was stimulated by intelligent debates. Beryl and Doug borrowed money for university tuitions and encouraged their daughters to be the best they could be. In retirement in Victoria, British Columbia, she always tracked her daughters' progress and celebrated their milestones.

After a lengthy illness, Beryl died peacefully on July 2nd, 2005. Her loving husband Doug, who dedicated himself to her daily care for 6 years, was beside her. She also leaves behind her devoted daughters Jane and Lee, her lifelong friend and sister, Dorothy, her sister Betty and numerous nephews and nieces. Beryl was predeceased by her parents, Hubert and Edith Dunk of Regina and brother, Arthur of California. Interment will occur in Regina. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Oak Bay Kiwanis Pavilion, 3034 Cedar Hill Road, Victoria, British Columbia, V8T 3J3. We extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated caregivers who provided tremendous love and support to our beloved Beryl, a beautiful wife, sister and mother and an incredible woman in her own right.