

Dale Joanne Gibson (nee McAlpine)

With great sadness we share that Dale passed away peacefully on February 21, 2024, with her family by her side. She is lovingly remembered and greatly missed by her husband Richard, her children Glenn (Jess) in Victoria BC; Neil (Alex) in Hertfordshire England; and Janice (Troy Messam) in Ottawa ON, as well as her sister Arden (Bob Irving) in Sidney BC, and her faithful canine companion Ginger. "Nana" was very proud of her grandchildren Henry, Miles, and Fraser (Gibson) and Vivian and Amelia (Messam) and treasured her large extended family of cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Dale was born in Vancouver to Margaret and Donald McAlpine, who moved to Langford when she was a toddler and then Saanich. Dale had a lovely voice and enjoyed singing along with the popular music of Johnny Mathis and The Crewcuts, as she and her sister playfully did the dishes. Trips to visit her "Nanny" at Qualicum Beach as a child were a cherished memory that she spoke of often, and she enjoyed blackberry picking and other harvesting opportunities, even winning a prize for growing and canning beans at the early age of 10yrs. She attended Strawberry Vale school as a youngster, then SJ Willis and Mount View for high school, where she was active in the Future Nurses Club and the Curling Club, for which she was the treasurer. Dale maintained contact with many of her classmates throughout her life and cherished these relationships deeply.

Married to Dick (as he was known) in 1963, Dale took on raising her family with enthusiasm, patience, and great productivity. She was an active volunteer at her children's schools and flourished as a homemaker by creating an environment full of love, acceptance, and comfort. She had a golden touch in the kitchen with talents that ranged from lovingly making freshly baked bread every Monday so it would

be ready to greet her children after school, canning and jam making the vast complement of produce grown in Dick's Garden, high-quality wine making with a wide range of fruits and berries, and hosting incredible family dinners with extended family. She shared her knowledge with her children and grandchildren, and baking cinnamon buns with Nana became a favoured activity when they came to visit.

Dale and Dick danced brilliantly together, with a particular skill for "The Jitterbug", which was always entertaining for those who were lucky enough to see them in action. Their partnership was evident as she assisted Dick with his successful contracting business as much as possible, even helping with a few of the builds in the early years and taking courses for accounting so that she could manage the bookkeeping like a pro. As the wife of a dedicated Central Saanich Lions Club member for several decades, Dale was deeply involved in the club's many efforts to support the local community and her volunteer time helped with the success of activities such as purchasing Christmas sponsorship gifts for families, annual Central Saanich Days, decorating for activities, and supporting many youth-focused programs.

A talented self-taught seamstress, Dale began sewing clothing for her children when they were young and could knit any design imaginable, producing stunning sweaters that reflected the interests of her family. Her skills became even more evident as she took on creating beautiful costumes for her daughter's dance studio, which she continued long after Janice had moved from Victoria, and because of her talent and innovative designs, Dale went on to work the Butchart Gardens summer stage show in the late 80's for several years and created the pieces for their 12 Days of Christmas display. Her ability to develop a pattern from any photo garnered her much admiration and she fashioned many unique and impressive creations for extremely satisfied (and often repeat) customers, that included many luxurious wedding and grad

dressess. She made several costumes for the Sidney Town Crier, made items for the Saanich Peninsula Hospital Auxiliary, and was even asked to assist with the costume for Marty the Marmot.

Dale loved many genres of music but inherited a love for classical and opera from her father Donald. Through her connection at Butchart Gardens, Dale began working for Pacific Opera Victoria (POV) in the costume shop, creating exquisite pieces that graced the Royal Theatre for many years. She became a member of I.A.T.S.E to work backstage as a dresser, where she assisted POV as well as many traveling shows, notably Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada, and many popular artists...even Prince! With a love for opera, Dale appreciated the ongoing offer of tickets for many years after her tenure at POV, something she was able to share with her sister.

Dale was extremely proud of her 3 kids and made sure that they had the wings to accomplish their individual dreams, despite it taking them further away from her. She quietly supported them in all their efforts and celebrated their unique gifts with gentle wisdom. She was a consistent and sympathetic sounding board that could also deliver necessary motherly advice with a kindness that took the sting out of difficult messaging. Hearing of her grandchildren's adventures brought her immense joy, despite the distance, and she eagerly looked forward to every visit from afar. She had a clever, dry sense of humor that was inherited by her kids but was often missed if you weren't paying attention, and she loved to share stories of her children and grandchildren. She had a close bond with her extended maternal family and took great pleasure in hearing from them and ensuring that everyone kept in touch. Like her grandmother Esther before her, Dale had a gift for making things fun for kids and always thought about how she could entertain the youngest members of the family in a room full of adults.

Dale and Dick continued to live and raise their Glenn, Neil and Janice in the house Dick built in Central Saanich, from shortly after they were married to the present. They saw significant changes in the neighbourhood over the years as farmland became residential and many houses took over the landscape, and Dale saw this as an opportunity to develop relationships with many of the people that came to call the area home. She was a consistent dog walker, frequently seen out with one of the many dogs that the family had over the years, both early in the morning and in the evening, which gave her the opportunity to greet many canine companions and their humans. Much later she was responsible for starting a semi-regular pot-luck Canada Day celebration on their little street, which saw everyone come out on the Gibson front lawn with their special dishes to enjoy the special day together. She could be counted on to help anyone that needed assistance in the area and was a special support to one elderly neighbour after she lost her husband, helping to navigate her life forward by taking her grocery shopping every week, taking her to her appointments, even teaching her how to pay her bills. That was Dale. If someone needed help and she could do it, she would!

Travel was something Dale did with enthusiasm when she could, whether it was annual trips to visit family in Saskatchewan and Northern BC, and Janice in Winnipeg and Ottawa, or more adventurous locations such as New Zealand, Australia, Laos and England with Dick and France, Italy, and Greece with Janice. She had many epic adventures of which she retold amazing and hilarious stories, and usually came back with a new cuisine that she wanted to tackle. She was a fantastic cook so this came easily to her, and her family liked to tease about where she might have the opportunity to go next so that they could enjoy international cuisine right there at home.

Dale was gentle and kind and always remained humble about her many accomplishments, but to everyone she knew she was

exceptional. After 10 courageous years of living with Parkinson's Disease and actively pursuing methods to limit the progression, Dale was also diagnosed with a cruel and debilitating neuropathy in her hands and feet that robbed her of the things she loved to do most, such as sew, knit, bake and walk her dog. Despite this she bravely attempted to stay positive with her loved ones and was witty and selfless in spirit until her very last moments. When asked if she had any words of wisdom she reminded us of something she said often, "be kind to each other".

Dale's family wishes to extend their heartfelt thanks to the many nurses, doctors, and social workers of the Victoria General Hospital who cared so attentively for her in her last weeks, as well as the family, friends and neighbours that have provided their generous support over the last few challenging months.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation <https://www.michaeljfox.org/> or the Kidney Foundation of Canada <https://kidney.ca/>

A family celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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