

Dr. Kerry Mason

Our beloved Kerry passed away peacefully at home in Victoria on August 7, 2023. Just as she wished, she spent her last weeks privately and quietly, visiting with a few close friends and family members.

Kerry was born in Edmonton Alberta on October 3, 1950 to Dorothy and Stewart Mason. They soon moved to Calgary, where she spent a happy childhood with her brothers Garth and Ross, and a wide network of friends. Kerry made friends easily; she enjoyed meeting people, and it was always reciprocated. She acquired social skills from Dorothy's bridge parties and entertaining, and by accompanying Stewart on business trips around Alberta. Kerry's pleasure in meeting people and experiencing new things made for a life-long love of travel, which was in turn passed down to her children.

With a brilliant mind, Kerry appreciated her rigorous early education at Holy Cross School. Her mother fostered an interest in the arts and culture, visiting galleries and museums, and attending musical, operatic, and ballet performances, Kerry participated in various sports and events at the Glencoe Club, skiing in the Rockies, and later riding. She always loved animals and spending time outdoors, again traits she passed down to her children. Some of her best childhood memories were of the Alberta ranches of Uncle Jack – where she took her first steps – and Uncle Fred – where she acquired her Arabian horse Kim.

In 1963 Stewart decided to move the family to Victoria, where Kerry graduated from Victoria High School in 1967. She not only developed another group of friends there, but was mentored by history teacher Tommy Mayne, who much later was an honorary grandparent to our children. Kerry also was introduced to the art and writing of the iconic Victoria artist Emily Carr, which had a profound impact on her life.

Next Kerry started classes at the University of Victoria, living and working at Mattick's Farm, and sometimes riding her horse to classes from Carley's stables. In 1969 Kerry left Victoria for a two-year European adventure, based in London and travelling as far as Italy and Morocco. She enjoyed the art and cultural attractions of Europe, worked at the London fashion house Feathers, and reveled in being young and adventurous in an exciting place and time. In London she met Barry Dodd, her first husband, whom she married in Calgary in 1971 and

divorced in 1982. By late 1972 they had relocated to Victoria where their daughter Sarah was born. Kerry, busy as a mother and homemaker, returned to UVic and completed a dual-major BA in 1978.

Meanwhile, the BC politician Grace McCarthy's office heard of Kerry's abilities and interest in Emily Carr, and in 1977 recruited her to establish and manage the new Emily Carr Gallery on Wharf Street. Over the next 11 years, in the building once occupied by Carr's father's shop, Kerry curated 27 exhibits about Carr and BC artists. Outside work, Kerry was an advocate for art, volunteering for years as a director of the Community Arts Council, editing the Arts Calender, serving as the President of the CAC of Greater Victoria, and as a director on the BC Arts Council. While Kerry always put her role as Sarah's mother first, she worked tirelessly to promote art both as the manager of the Emily Carr Gallery, and as a volunteer.

In 1985 Kerry and Jamie, brought together by their shared interest in BC culture and history, fell in love; the start of 38 wonderful years together. Kerry and Jamie married in January 1987, and welcomed their son James in 1987 and their daughter Charlotte (originally Katherine) in 1989. Kerry and Jamie were collaborators in all things, always deeply in love, and best friends as well as married. They supported each other fully in all of their various professional and academic

endeavors, while raising their great family together. They shared too many wonderful times to describe over those 38 years, including holidays, special occasions and birthdays, traveling, and simply enjoying each other's company at home. It was a strong, equal, and fulfilling relationship – Kerry was the best partner imaginable.

In 1993 Kerry completed her MA in Art History at UVic, while taking care of two pre-school children and working as a teaching assistant. She also started her art consulting and appraisal business, which continued until 2023. From 1995-2001 Kerry was the Curator of the Alcheringa Gallery, featuring contemporary indigenous art from the Northwest Coast and the south Pacific. She expanded her knowledge of Northwest coast art and interacted with artists to become an expert in the field. This led in turn to her being recruited to establish the Black Tusk Gallery; a new commercial gallery for contemporary Northwest Coast art in Whistler BC. From 2005-2007 Kerry worked as the Curator of the University of Victoria's Maltwood Art Museum.

From 2001-2022 Kerry taught at the University of Victoria, first for the Department of Art History, and later for Continuing Studies- offering courses that often featured Emily Carr and Indigenous Art of the Northwest Coast. She found great joy in teaching, taking a real delight in sharing her incredible range of knowledge. At times she taught at other institutions, including an MA program at Western Colorado University, at the Victoria College of Art, and at the Vancouver Island School of Art. Kerry enjoyed designing and leading a number of UVic Travel Study courses, taking groups to the Northwest Coast and to the American Southwest. Kerry was in demand as a speaker, invited to present at events across Canada, in a number of American states, and in Mexico, as well as at many local conferences.

As well as teaching, Kerry continued her work as an art consultant, appraiser, and curator for a wide range of clients

throughout North America; government agencies, educational institutions, museums and galleries, and many private collectors. Kerry estimated that in a decade she curated more than 50 exhibitions, plus contributing to others. She also wrote a number of articles and many exhibit catalogues, and had two books published, *Sunlight in the Shadows: the Landscape of Emily Carr* and more recently, *The Life and Art of Arthur Pitts (1889-1972)*, extending from her MA thesis. Recently, Kerry's lifetime contribution to academic art history, teaching, and community service was recognized by the University of Victoria in granting her an Honorary Doctorate in Art History. She was delighted to have a virtual presentation of this honour, to wear the hood and see the diploma, with family a few days before her passing.

While building a successful career, Kerry's focus on people – particularly her family and friends – never wavered. She always thought of others, which made her the best partner, the best mother, and the best Grandma/Nanny imaginable. Kerry was powerfully maternal, and worked tirelessly at being a great mother. She was incredibly supportive of her children, and made every effort to ensure that we provided them with the love and material support they required to thrive and be happy. She was incredibly proud of how Sarah, James, and Charlotte turned out, with their growth into capable, successful, and productive adults. Always nurturing and supportive, Kerry was delighted to take on the later role of Grandma to Sloane and Nanny to Lyall and Thomas.

She remembered every birthday, and made sure that every holiday celebration – she especially loved Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving – was special for her family and her friends. Kerry was incredibly generous with her time, her love, and her friendship. All who knew her recognize the light that she introduced into their days. Kerry was just a wonderful person. She embraced life enthusiastically, with optimism and joie de vivre. She had an

ability to show up and engage for every event and every person. She loved music of nearly all genres, loved to read, with an enthusiasm for mysteries, had a great sense of humor, was creative, and took pleasure from most activities. She enjoyed cooking and baking, particularly if it was for a special occasion, was a productive knitter, enjoyed sewing, and even liked ironing, which she said provided a quiet time for reflection. She was always physically active, enjoying various sports, bicycling, and lately ensuring she had a good daily walk.

Kerry faced her final illness with her typical strength, positive attitude, and grace. We are grateful for the care of Dr. Grimwood and Dr. Poonja, and the support of the VIHA Palliative Care Team, which made it possible for Kerry to remain at home for her last weeks.

Recently Kerry told me that the 38 years we had together was not nearly long enough, but that no matter how long we had, it could never be long enough. She is the love of my life.

Kerry is remembered lovingly by her husband, Jamie Morton, daughter Sarah Dodd (Cory), son Jimmy Morton (Gill), daughter Charlotte Morton Richards (Brad), brother Garth Mason (Vicki), brother Ross Mason (Kathryn), grandchildren Sloane Kinney, Lyall Richards, Thomas Richards, nephew Tyler Mason, sister-in-law Jan Golden (Mark) and sons, and a number of cousins. She also will be remembered fondly by her many friends, made over the course of her life from early childhood to her recent professional life. Her large and diverse group of close friends extended from Victoria to Switzerland, and was very important to her. There are far too many people to attempt to list them all here, but they know who they are, and how much they meant to Kerry; she visited, spoke or communicated with many of you herself in her last weeks, and she was grateful for your love and support.

On Kerry's explicit instructions, there will be no funeral or

celebration of life event. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to your preferred animal rescue organization, to the Canadian Wildlife Federation, to the Canadian Red Cross, or to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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