

Elizabeth Ruth MacWilliam (née Jack)

Elizabeth “Betty” Ruth MacWilliam born in Pembroke, Ontario, on January 17, 1926, died peacefully and with grace on December 5, 2020, one month short of her 95th birthday. As the daughter of Margaret Willa Jack (née Estabrooks), a nurse who served in the 1918 influenza epidemic, her childhood was spent living in train station towns in Ontario, where her father, Charles Henry Jack, worked as a station master for the CPR. With a strong survival instinct, she had the will to overcome hardships when, as a three-year-old, she contracted infantile paralysis during Ontario’s 1929 polio epidemic, which impacted her left side. She attended high school at Branksome Hall in Toronto and then went on to study at McGill’s Macdonald College, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree. Working as a dietitian at the Algonquin Hotel in St. Andrews, NB, she met her future husband, Herbert MacWilliam, who went on to study medicine at Dalhousie and later in the Canadian Navy. They were married in Halifax on December 17, 1948.

Over the next seventy years, Betty and Herb lived in Victoria, BC and raised four sons. Betty was a very independent woman with an insatiable curiosity and keen intellect. She enjoyed challenges, including redesigning the family home on Upper Terrace, the new home at Ardmore and finally overseeing the renovation of their Hampshire House condominium on Beach Drive. She was an avid reader, a formidable bridge player and, later in life, added jigsaw puzzles and the newspaper’s Jumble to her daily activities.

She loved connecting with family and friends through letters, phone calls and email and was a natural networker, with an uncanny memory for people’s birthdays and anniversaries. She enjoyed travelling with her husband and friends and, on two occasions, with 20 family members to Mexico. She was

predeceased by her sister Nancy Mattern, her husband Herbert MacWilliam, son James MacWilliam and grandson Tristan MacWilliam. She leaves behind an extended family of her sons, David (Barbara), Rob (Sirje), Scott (Susan) and her 7 grandchildren Matthew, Reece, Kent, Paige, Tyler, Sumalee and Darby, as well as 5 great grandchildren, Connor, Bryn, Caleb, Gavin and Gavin's younger brother, who was born just in time for her to know of his safe arrival.

The family would like to thank the staff at Victoria General Hospital for their outstanding care. In particular, thanks to Dr Sean Benninger and nurse Andrea, who were a great help to the family in these difficult times. The family plans to gather for a private celebration in the future but, in the meantime, Betty had chosen to be a part of Royal Oak Burial Park's natural burial in The Woodlands. In lieu of flowers, please direct any donations to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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