

Gertrude Wilma (Merrell) Oliver

Gertrude Wilma (Merrell) Oliver of Victoria, BC passed away peacefully at home on August 4, 2021. She was the youngest of seven children born on September 18, 1928 at home to Clarence and Nellie (Helen Cruise) Merrell in Dauphin, Manitoba. Wilma was predeceased by her siblings and by her husband and high school sweetheart, Patrick Oliver in 1987 after 39 years of marriage.

Wilma was the beloved mother of Wendy (Bill) Gook, Bette Cameron and Gerry (Les) Erickson and she was the adored grandmother and great-grandmother of six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, all of whom were very important in her life. Wilma was the light in her three daughters' lives and she loved them beyond all else. *Mom embodied the importance and value of commitment, patience, unconditional love, honesty, understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, laughter, caring, generosity, peace, kindness and music (our home was filled with her singing, she knew so many songs). She always encouraged us to strive to do our very best in all circumstances while at the same time made us understand that we are all only human so we will slip up and make mistakes but when that happens to take full responsibility and do our very best to make amends.* They have so many special memories growing up in Victoria and Prince George which continued throughout Wilma's life when she visited them in all the various places, they lived... *our homes and our families were always blessed when Mom was with us.*

Wilma graduated from Dauphin Collegiate (Grade 13) and completed her education at the Sprott-Shaw School of Business in Victoria, BC.

The majority of Wilma's career was spent working for the BC Telephone Company in Prince George from 1960 to 1987 when she

retired to Victoria, BC with her husband, Pat, back to the very place they left in 1960 to move to Prince George. Wilma was hired as Executive Secretary to the Division Manager of the Northern Interior District and held that position for her entire tenure. Needless to say, she loved her job and all the people she worked with during her years there.

Wilma's daughters can attest to the fact that she was never one to sit still... in addition to her demanding full-time position at BC Tel, she always had a home project on the go. These projects ranged from reupholstering our living room furniture, landscaping our yard, building a rock wall, painting and repainting the interior and exterior of our home, cooking delicious Sunday meals, numerous sewing and knitting projects and, of course, always organizing our home space (chaos was not in our lifestyle!).

Mom never wasted a moment... she was always there for us and her grandchildren too. It's still a marvel to us how she not only managed to do all she did, but the manner in which she did it seemed effortless. Her work ethic was truly astonishing! And we were always so proud of our mother. She never took anything for granted, never assumed life should be easy, and never failed to provide for us. Mom's life was not without its many challenges throughout her 92 years... starting with her mom's passing when she was only 14 and her dad's passing when she was 18, she embraced life head on with resilience, determination and grace. We never heard her complain about anything.

Wilma is also survived by her devoted partner of 22 years, Melvin Burr, and by his loving children Carolyn (Dick) Wilkinson, Grant (Sue) Burr, Jacquie Boyer, Judy Burr and their families. She had so many fond memories of their life in Salmon Arm spent golfing, swimming, dancing, skating, entertaining visitors, working around their home and canning preserves from the large garden Mel planted every year. They also travelled the world and occupied their winters with annual golf trips down south, always making new friends or reconnecting with old friends and reuniting with their families there.

For the last ten years of Wilma's life, Les and Gerry provided a loving home for her creating wonderful memories of family gatherings, celebrations, reunions, trips... so many happy times where Wilma was always in her element sharing her wit, charm, hearty laugh, love and beautiful spirit. And how she loved to sing and dance!

She also became an avid reader, loved her quiet time, avoided technology, always had a knitting project on the go for someone in the family, listened to different genres of music, got hooked on sudoku and crosswords and she loved watching sports. Wilma told her daughters before she passed away that every night in bed, she recited to herself The Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd and that not only was it good for her spirit, it was good for her brain because she never forgot one word.

Mel and Wilma continued their friendship communicating regularly by phone and they visited each other and respective families often over the last ten years.

Wilma had a loving and caring relationship with her many nieces and nephews with whom she stayed in close touch with over the years.

Dear, beautiful Wilma was a great lady, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, partner, friend and human being. She lived her life with gratitude in her heart and she cherished all of her family and friends. She was a rare treasure and we will all miss her forever.

There will be no formal service.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

www.mccallgardens.com