Josephine Bernice Campbell

Josephine Bernice Campbell (née Ward) born – June 21, 1940, passed away on Friday, July 4, 2025, in Victoria, BC – the city where she was born into a large and loving family, guided by her parents, Walter and Alice Ward (née Clear).



Jo, as she was affectionately known, began her working life at a grocery store on Cook Street. It was there, in 1960, that she met her future husband, Alex Campbell. They married in 1961 and went on to have three children—first two boys, then completed their family with a daughter in 1967.

Jo and Alex left their hometown, raising their young family in Port Alberni, Surrey, and Ladysmith before returning to Victoria in 1977. After selling the 49th Grocery in Ladysmith, they opened the first Thrifty Foods in Fairfield alongside partners Ernie and Carol Skinner—launching not just a successful business venture, but a lifelong friendship.

Jo quickly became a beloved presence among staff and customers alike. She was always ready with a big smile, a great story, and her legendarily generous heart. She cherished her Thrifty Foods family and made it a point to truly connect with people, one-on-one. During the Thrifty era, everyone looked forward to Jo’s store visits – and perhaps even more to her shenanigans at the annual Christmas party.

Jo was part of a very close-knit family, and she, Alex, and their children spent many joyful days at her parents' home on Scott Street—often surrounded by her siblings, cousins, and lifelong family friends. The house may have been small, but it was always bursting with people, laughter, and love. Everyone was welcome, and there was never a shortage of good times.

This deep love of family was always at the centre of Jo's heart. She was a proud and devoted mother and grandmother, and her grandchildren were truly the light of her life. Whether it was sleepovers at the house, adventures on the boat, or weekends at the lake, Jo made sure every moment was filled with joy and fun—so much so that the kids were never in a hurry to go home.

Though Jo was always a nervous flyer, she overcame her fear to enjoy many travel adventures with Alex. Together, they explored far-off places like Russia, China, France, England, and Portugal—and especially loved their time in Mexico. She was just as uneasy on the water but again pushed past her fears to enjoy both sailing and powerboating.

Jo also had a gift for gathering people. She loved a good tea party—any excuse to bring friends together over delicious food, warm conversation, and plenty of laughter. No one ever left one of Jo's gatherings hungry, thirsty, or without a smile.

True to her generous spirit, Jo dedicated time to charity and volunteer work, quietly supporting countless causes across Victoria. She was a deeply generous donor, willing to give where help was needed. One of her greatest sources of pride was the Alex & Jo Campbell Centre for Health and Wellness at Camosun College. Jo not only helped fund the building itself but also established annual bursaries for nursing students—investing in the future of compassionate care. Many other charities benefited from her kindness, whether through heartfelt donations or her famously fierce auction bidding.

Jo spent the last two years at St. Charles Manor, where she was cared for with kindness and compassion. Her family extends heartfelt thanks to the wonderful staff who supported our much-loved Mom. Jo especially enjoyed the times when Stephanie Greaves would visit to sing many of her favourite songs – these moments brought her joy.

Jo leaves behind her beloved children: Alex (Elsie), Lorne (Nancy), and Bonnie (Frank); her cherished grandchildren: Pelle (Genevieve), Haden (Gabby), Sophie (Nicolai), Shea, Nick, Alison, Kayleigh, and Connor. She is also survived by her siblings: Terry (Diane), Cathy (Bob), Nancy (Wayne), and Penny (Peter), as well as an extended circle of cousins, nieces, nephews, and dear friends—too many to name, but each held a special place in her heart.

She loved deeply and was deeply loved.

A private family service will be held with a celebration of life to be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers please consider donating to the Alex and Jo Centre for Health and Wellness at Camosun College, in honour of Jo's enduring legacy of care and generosity. https://webservices.camosun.ca/foundation/memorial-gifts/

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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