

Katherine “Kay” Horocholyn (nee Rybchuk)

On October 20, just 13 days after her 100th birthday, Katherine (Kay) Horocholyn (nee Rybchuk) passed away suddenly and peacefully in the Victoria, BC home of her daughter Judy Beaudry and husband Len. The last two years of her life were spent living with Judy and Len. Right up until the time she died, she was in remarkably good health and spirit for her age even though in the latter part of her life she was bed-ridden.

Her father Metro Rybchuk (b.1877) emigrated to northeastern Saskatchewan from Ukraine in 1911, and her mother Mary Kotowski (b.1882) with the couple's three children left the Ukraine to join him two years later. Prior to their arrival Metro worked as a farm labourer to pay for their trip to Canada. The reunited family established their first home in northeastern Saskatchewan on rented farmland twelve miles from the town of Canora. After residing on the rented farm for several years, the family created a farm of their own on homestead land near the village of Swan Plain also in northeastern Saskatchewan. They remained on the homestead farm until about 1920, and then moved to yet another farm in the same area which was where Kay was born on October 7, 1921. Interestingly, Kay's birth certificate shows her place of birth as Section 15, Township 37, Range 1, West of the second meridian. This, of course, was the legal description for the land on which the farm was situated. Kay, was the third youngest of the nine children born to Mary and Metro. Metro died from cancer in 1932 at age 55, and only a few years later Mary moved from the farm to a nearby hamlet, and at a later date still to the town of Canora. She passed away in Canora at age 81.

At the time of her father's death, Kay was just 11 years old.

Two years later her mother arranged for her to live with a couple on a nearby farm and help the father whose wife was ill to take care of their two teenage sons. She did this for several years while attending school. On July 12, 1938 she married Bill Horocholyn, and shortly thereafter began raising a family. Her first child Iris was born in 1940, her second child Judy in 1943, and her third child Rick in 1954. Sometime around the late 40's Kay and Bill moved to the nearby town of Kamsack, Saskatchewan, one of the larger centers in that area of the province. Bill soon became involved in running two businesses—a grocery store and a garage, and Kay being an enterprising woman opened up a coffee shop business of her own on Kamsack's Main Street. The coffee shop quickly developed into a very successful business and was an especially popular place for CNR workers and others who enjoyed going there for coffee and baking. Kay routinely got up at 4 am to bake a batch of pies for the CNR men who worked the early shift.

Sometime around 1950 Kay and Bill decided to purchase the only photo studio in Kamsack. Preoccupied as Bill was with his other businesses, it was decided that Kay would operate the photo studio. For the next several years Kay ran both the coffee shop business and the photo studio but eventually closed the coffee shop after the building in which both businesses were located was severely damaged by a fire. Given that Kay had no previous experience as a photographer, she had no choice but to take courses to help her learn the trade. For more than 30 years she was the owner-operator of Tru-Art Studio on Kamsack's Main Street, and throughout that entire period she served as the designated photographer at hundreds of weddings and funerals, and took hundreds, if not thousands, of baby pictures. She also worked as a photographer under contract for the RCMP and various government agencies.

A part of the studio business involved the retailing of film and cameras, and Kay had her own dark room where she developed and printed thousands of photos for her many customers often

working all night long to get the job done. And, if all of that wasn't enough for one person, during part of that same period Kay also worked under contract with National Schools, a contract that required her to take high school year book photos annually in a large region East Central region of Saskatchewan. To fulfill the terms of the contract she was forced to drive alone thousands of miles each year from school to school in the middle of prairie winters on roads that were as frequently as not icy and dangerous, sleep overnight in hotels, and then return home only to spend long hours alone back in the studio printing the photos she took and sending them to the schools who ordered them as well as to families of the students who wanted to purchase copies for their own private use. Being as strong and resilient as she was this didn't bother her, and in later life she stated that she would be happy to do it all over again. She was enormously proud of being an independent business woman.

In 1983 Kay and Bill left Kamsack to retire in Victoria, and it wasn't long at all before Kay came to be heavily involved doing volunteer work there at St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, and various other venues. Raised a Ukrainian and fluent in the language, she did everything she possibly could to support and promote Ukrainian culture. This included many years of service as an unpaid board member for the Ukrainian Culture Centre as well as countless hours of volunteer labour helping the Centre prepare for and conduct its many fund-raising suppers. And notwithstanding how busy Kay usually was during those volunteer years, she still managed to squeeze in the additional time needed to make and sell home-made perogies and holubtsi, and maintain her attractively-landscaped yard full of flowers. She loved to be surrounded by beautiful things.

Sadly in 1995, Kay's husband Bill passed away at age 88 putting an end to their 57 years of marriage. In December of that year Kay's daughter Judy and her husband Len sold their

Regina home and moved to Victoria to live with her and help her out. They lived with Kay in her home until 2002 and then purchased and moved to a house of their own also in Victoria. For the next seven years Kay lived alone. Then in 2009 she sold her house and moved into Berwick House, an independent living facility only a few blocks away from where Judy and Len lived. She stayed at Berwick House for the next 10 years while paying frequent visits to Judy and Len at their house. In 2019 Judy and Len arranged for her to leave Berwick House and spend the rest of her life with them in their home, and that is where sadly her long life eventually came to an end.

Kay was always especially grateful for the many wonderful friends she made and in particular for their camaraderie, kindness and support. Her family now wishes to thank the people who made her life as rich and fulfilling as it was. Likely as not we will never get to meet most of you or even find out exactly what you did to enrich her life, but whatever it was, we thank you for it.

Kay was predeceased by her husband Bill, her father Metro, her mother Mary and her eight siblings Nick, Anna, Dora, Peter, Pauline, Wilma, Mary, and Steve.

She is survived by her daughters Iris Turell, Judy (Len) Beaudry, Richard (Lydia) Horocholyn; grandchildren Dianne (Chris) Koehler, Rob (Amy) Turell, Gary Turell; Stefan (Yoshiko) Horocholyn, Kalyna (Erin) Horocholyn; and great-grandchildren Braeden, Michael, Jenna, Yuriy, and Serhiy.

A Funeral Service will be held in the Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC on Friday, October 29, 2021 at 11AM. Those wishing to join virtually may do so by clicking the link below where condolences may also be offered to the family. Please use your video camera when joining so that family in attendance can see you and feel your support.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82643411786?pwd=QVVyaU9RS1JmdzZpY2U0WGtlcjU0QT09>

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