

Linda Olsen

Linda Olsen (nee Staf) was born on April 15, 1933 in Chilliwack, BC. She was the youngest daughter of Hilda and Carl Staf, Swedish-speaking immigrants from Finland, and sister to Ruth and Bernice. They lived on a farm in Aldergrove, selling the wood they cleared from the land, milk from the cows they kept, and for a time, the wool from the Angora rabbits they raised. Linda moved to Abbotsford after high school to work as a clerk for the family welfare office. She also sang with a band on weekends in the Abbotsford and Matsqui area. She spent many weekends in the summers at Cultus Lake with her sisters Ruth and Bernice and their friends, and many weekends in the winter skiing at Mt. Baker, Washington. She moved to Vancouver while in her early 20's to sing with a professional, touring women's quartet, *The Velvetones*, and to work as secretary to Dr. Gordon Shrum in the Physics Department at UBC, where she met her future husband, Bill.

She married in Vancouver in 1957, then moved to Chalk River, Ontario in 1958, shortly after their first child, Greg, was born. The family settled in Edmonton, Alberta in 1960, where Liz was born three years later, and David nine years after that, in 1972. Linda was a devoted mother and always a source of fun, love and support to her three children. She always actively helped and encouraged them in their interests, and was a friend to their friends. Over the years, she worked in secretarial and administrative positions, and never lost her love for singing and the arts.

In her late 40's, feeling restless and eager for a new challenge, Linda decided to return to school and attend university. She obtained her high school matriculation by correspondence and then enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts program at the University of Alberta. She received her BA in 1984 and her MA in Political Philosophy in 1993, at the age of 60. Her master's thesis, entitled "The Politics of Religion in

Leviathan" was a beautifully written and scholarly work, and a real source of pride for her children, and for Linda herself.

After university, she worked for the Alberta Purchasing Management Association (AIPMAC) and was very proud of her accomplishments there, being charged with setting up the brand new provincial office. As she was preparing to move to Gabriola Island in 1997, she was told that any of the 950 members of the association would write her a reference letter, should she need one.

The west coast and island life always appealed to Linda, and she was happy to return to a more temperate climate and build a home, which she helped design, on Gabriola Island. On Gabriola, Linda was the proprietor and host of Island B & B, a dedicated member of the Gabriola Lions Club and an avid supporter of island arts and culture. We all were very proud of her for carving out her own spot on the island and making it look so easy. She always conveyed to her kids that this was their home too. She made many friends on Gabriola through her volunteering efforts and warm demeanor, and loved living there.

In 2011, she met her beloved Phil, who became a constant companion. They enjoyed regular visits back and forth between Gabriola and Phil's home in Sidney, sharing a love of literature, poetry and the performing arts. Two years later, shortly after her 80th birthday, Linda suffered a heart attack and a resulting stroke, which meant she could no longer manage on her own, and island life was no longer possible.

The last few years were spent with Phil in Sidney, who lovingly cared for her and made sure she was able to attend her scheduled weekly activities, such as the stroke recovery group and Sidney Lions Club meetings, which she enjoyed and always looked forward to. They also regularly attended plays, movies and concerts together until mobility limitations posed too much of a challenge. Phil, your devotion to and love for

Linda was very evident and so much appreciated.

Linda passed away on February 21, 2017 after a brief illness. Though we miss her more than words can say, her spirit resides in her children Greg (Susan), Liz (Jack), David (Tracy); grandchildren Sophie and Harlan; sister Ruth (Jim); dear friend and soul mate, Phil; and, in the other family members and friends she left behind. We thank you, Linda, for your grace, your generosity, your intelligent reflection, your sense of humour and optimism, and for a life so well lived. May you rest in peace.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, May 6th, 2017 at 2:00 pm at Sequoia Centre, McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC. Donations in her memory may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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