

Lorraine Margaret Purtill

Lorraine Margaret Purtill (nee Foster) passed away peacefully in Victoria General Hospital on May 24, 2023, with her daughters by her side. Lorraine was born in Simpson, Saskatchewan on July 13, 1927, to Theresa and Hughie Foster. She grew up on a farm south of Lintlaw SK, the eldest of 7 children.

Lorraine attended Heatherbank school until Grade 8 and completed Grade 9 and 10 by correspondence. Plans to attend boarding school for Grade 11 in 1943 were delayed by a serious tooth infection that put her in hospital. The priest performed anointing of the sick and suggested she become a nun if she recovered (she settled on nurse instead). Her doctor enlisted the help of a local pilot to fly to Saskatoon for penicillin, which was just starting to be used to treat WWII soldiers with gas gangrene. She was the first person in that area to receive the drug, which saved her life. Boarding school had to wait as she stayed home to recover and help her mom with baby girl #6 (Gail, 1944). Soon after Gail was born, her sister Betty (girl #4) developed scarlet fever, giving Lorraine an opportunity to develop her nursing skills. She made it to boarding school for Grade 11 in 1944, then stayed home a couple years to help with the farm and her five little sisters. In 1947 she started the nursing program at the Regina Grey Nuns Hospital. In 1948 during Christmas break, she arrived home just in time to meet her baby brother Hughey, the caboose and only boy of the family.

Lorraine graduated as an RN in 1950 and worked briefly in the Kelvington hospital. She went to work in Penticton, B.C in 1951. In 1954 she went to Sarnia, ON and stayed with the St Joseph's Sisters where she gave birth to her first child and made the difficult decision to give her up. Her baby girl was adopted by a Catholic family and became Joanie (Stewart Beausoleil). Lorraine started dating Hugh Purtill soon

afterwards, a good Catholic boy with the same first name as her father and brother and with a sister who was preparing to be a nun. By 1956 he wanted to marry her. She told him about Mary Margaret (her name for Joanie) thinking he might change his mind, he did not. They were married on October 12, 1957, at St. Theresa Parish in Lintlaw, SK. They began their life together in Ontario, living in St. Catherines before settling in London. Four babies arrived in quick succession – Patrick Joseph (1958), Michael Steven (1959), Theresa Rose (1961), and Janice Maureen (1962). Mom continued to work as an RN between all of them. In 1966 they left Ontario due to Theresa's severe allergies and moved to Calgary where Colleen Marie (1967) arrived on Mother's Day.

Life was busy and full for mom and her home was always open! She loved to feed and sometimes house the many relatives and friends who passed through. She helped dad with a large garden and greenhouse that provided fresh greens and vegetables for eating and freezing. There were many family trips to the Okanagan, enjoying the lakes and picking fruit that would later be canned. She kept her calm when dad decided to buy a motorcycle (and the boys followed suit). She was calm again when dad decided to learn to fly (and the boys followed suit) and purchased a Cessna airplane, then later a Mooney. She enjoyed the flights to visit family in Ontario and Saskatchewan. When dad wanted to learn to sail, she joined him on the west coast and was qualified as a Proficient Sailing Skipper.

Mom worked as an RN until 1991. In 1993 she and dad travelled to Ontario where they met Joanie, her husband and son; she maintained a connection with Joanie for the remainder of her life. Mom enjoyed 5 years of retirement with dad before he suffered a debilitating stroke in 1996 and passed in September 1998. Mom was the epitome of strength when it came to supporting others in illness, especially Theresa, who experienced cancer at the age of 11 and was diagnosed with MS

at 25. Mom had a couple of memorable trips with Theresa, going to California in 1999 and on a Caribbean cruise in 2000. Theresa's MS took a turn for the worse near Christmas 2001, and she passed in March 2003.

For the next 20 years mom lived full out, visiting family (especially her sister Ida in California) and welcoming family, especially her children and grandchildren. It helped that Michael was a commercial airline pilot and provided passes. She flew to Taipei to visit Michael and his family when he worked for China Air and joined them on a trip to Thailand. They also included her on a family trip to Mexico. She joined Colleen and her granddaughter Elsa on overnight trips to Lake O'Hara at the age of 76 and 80. When she was 78, Colleen took her and Elsa on a tour of southeast Alaska. In 2011 she joined Patrick, Colleen and grandkids Elsa, Cassandra, and Ryan on a trip to the Maritimes, touring Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland. There were also trips to Tofino where she enjoyed being with family on beaches, in the rainforest and in the hot springs.

In her final years mom was supported at home in Calgary by Patrick and Fiona (2017-2021) and the wonderful Carewest C3 Beddington team (thank you Gwenda and staff). It had always been a dream of hers to live on Vancouver Island. Michael and Heather created a space for her in their Qualicum Beach home (2021-2022), which she nicknamed the "best care home in the west" and where she also spent time with her sister Gail. Her final days (2022-2023) were spent in Victoria with Janice who, along with her son Kyle, treated her like royalty.

Lorraine's passing was preceded by her parents, husband, brother (Hughey Foster), daughter-in-law (JoAnn Stevens), daughter (Theresa), and sisters (Ida Finnie, Joyce Wolstenholme, Betty Walters). Her memory will live on and be cherished by her sisters Fay Burghardt and Gail Olyniuk, her children and their spouses, her grandchildren, great grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

A Funeral Mass will be held at Corpus Christi Parish in Calgary, Alberta on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 10:30 am. There will be a reception to celebrate her life at the Corpus Christi Parish Hall following the mass. Her ashes will be interred at the mausoleum in Queens Park Cemetery, Calgary, Alberta.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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