Luisa Russo

Luisa was born on the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands, in 1915. She had a happy childhood and was known as a spirited, bright, and determined girl. She was loved for her grace and wit throughout her life.

Her first trip away from home was to join her new husband Julio in Spanish West Africa, where he managed a plantation. With the notable exception of the need to shake her shoes out every time to avoid scorpions, Luisa and Julio enjoyed the life of a small Spanish- speaking community in an exotic land. But when World War II broke out, they eventually returned to the Canary Islands where Luisa lived with relatives and Julio left for England to join the British Army.

Their son Jules was born in Las Palmas in 1943. A year later, there was no end in sight for the war and Luisa determined that if she ever wanted Julio to meet his son, she would need to make it to England. And she did. She made it to Gibraltar and across Spain to Lisbon and then onto the last Red Cross Flight to cross the channel on June 5, 1944, arriving in England on D-Day. By war's end she was reunited with Julio and father and son met each other.

The family settled in England and she found a job in the Spanish production office of the BBC Overseas Service. She loved her job and the international celebrities she met in the BBC cafeteria. She loved the London West End theatre. She loved the young Queen and took every opportunity to see her on the balcony of Buckingham Palace; she loved her family and their home. Her eyes sparkled with delight at the memory of London. She continued working at the BBC until she was 75.

Widowed shortly thereafter, she immigrated to Canada to join her son and his family in Victoria, when she was 78. To meet new friends and contribute to her new community she joined

various volunteer organizations and received recognition for 15 years of service as an Active Auxiliary Member with the Royal Jubilee Hospital Auxiliary. Independent as always, she explored Victoria with a bus pass that took her to the end of every line. She regularly took the bus to Thrifty Foods for groceries, until she was 103 years old.

Thank you very much to Island Health Community Nurses and Home Care staff, whose kindness and care made it possible for Luisa to remain in her own home with her family until the very end of her well-lived life.

Luisa is lovingly remembered by her son and his wife Anne, grandchildren Stephen, Anna and her husband Taylor and great grand-daughters Luisa, Josephine and Isabella.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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