

Madeleine Shorthill

1945-2010

In the early hours of 30th September Madeleine passed away peacefully in her sleep, bringing to an end a long and valiant fight against cancer. Left to mourn her are Graham her husband, daughters Claire and Gail (Mike) and granddaughter Zoe in Victoria while her brothers Robert (Glynis) and Roger (Julie), sister Barbara and numerous cousins nephews and nieces do so in England.

Madeleine was born in Hessle in the east riding of Yorkshire and, after grammar school in Hull, she moved to Manchester and enrolled in the Nursing Diploma program given by the University of Manchester and Crumpsall Hospital. During the three years she was a student she met Graham and they were engaged in 1968. After she graduated, they were married in August 1969 and moved to Oxford where she did postgraduate work in intensive care nursing for people on heart/lung machines at the Churchill Hospital and Radcliffe Infirmary. However, the late sixties was a time for action and adventure and so they decided to find out what the new world had to offer before settling down. They arrived in Victoria in January 1970, walked along the waterfront on a cold, bright Sunday morning, saw the Olympics and fell in love with the place. Madeleine joined St Joseph's Hospital in Fairfield just in time for the sea change in child birth: as Head Nurse of Obstetrics and Gynecology she spearheaded the introduction of a number of programs in family-centred child birth and fetal monitoring. It was during this period that she and Graham built their home in Cordova Bay and where she found enormous pleasure in gardening, particularly growing roses.

As time passed, the need for a new hospital and one located close to growing centres of the population became obvious. Madeleine was part of the team that designed and steered the

development of V.G.H. at Helmcken Road but in 1982 she decided to take a break from nursing and soon two daughters were born, Claire in 1984 and Gail in 1985 in the wards she had created. This experience was reprised last November when her granddaughter Zoe was born in the same place. After five years of domesticity, nursing called again and she returned to extended care nursing based mainly at Mt. Tolmie Hospital where she played various roles including Care Coordinator and Manager until this bitter disease forced her to stop last February.

Over the past year she received tremendous emotional support from her family and friends as well as from all the members of the Mt. Tolmie Hospital and this was mirrored by the medical support she gained. Starting with Dr. MacNaughton and the initial diagnosis and ending with Dr Wilde at Victoria Hospice, Madeleine received superb medical care from the surgeons, oncologists, urologists and all their nursing staff throughout her illness. It was not just the high level of professional skill they displayed, but the human compassion and concern with which they exercised these skills that leaves an indelible impression. In particular, the work of the Palliative Care Unit during Madeleine's last days will be remembered for a very long time.

The memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Friday 8th October, Sequoia Gardens Memorial, 4665 Falaise Drive, Royal Oak followed by a reception at the family home. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in Madeleine's name to B.C. Cancer Foundation (Vancouver Island) and Victoria Hospice Society.