

Margaret Gustafson

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Margaret Gustafson at the age of 79. Margaret passed away peacefully at the Royal Jubilee Hospital on September 23rd. She was with her daughter, Kathy, and son, Stephen.

Margaret, Meg, was born Margaret Mary Elizabeth Jones on July 22, 1946, in Cardiff, Wales, and was the daughter of Lawrence (Lory) Jones (1910-1997) and Doreen Jones (1915-1996) and sister of Susan (Sue) Jones (Davis).

Margaret always had a calling to help others. This led her to a career as a nurse and midwife. Graduating from the Infirmary at Cardiff Hospital, her first job was as a midwife in Birmingham. Think "Call The Midwife" bicycle and all. In Birmingham, she became friends with another nurse—from Calgary. After they qualified as midwives, she planned on going to Australia and Meg thought it was a good time to start the World Tour she'd been thinking about for years. "Assisted Passage" to Aussie was only £10 if they worked as nurses for 2 years. They ended up assigned to the Queenstown hospital in Tasmania, a small mining town on the west coast. They only worked there for 5 months, then went on to Sydney—the Big City.

While in Tasmania, Margaret met Ralph through a group of young folks for casual outings, bushwalking, etc. Within 3 months, Ralph left town and they never expected to meet again. After lots of letters they both ended up in Darwin! But once again they separated, Ralph going to work in Singapore, Meg going to work in Alice Springs, just about in the middle of "The Outback" of Australia.

Not one to pass up on a good thing, Ralph convinced Margaret to come and visit him but when it was time to catch her flight Margaret decided that she would rather not. Missing her flight

affording her an extra week in Singapore and an extra week with Ralph. An extra week that eventually turned into 53 years of marriage.

Ralph and Margarat were married in Cardiff in 1972 and then moved back to Singapore where they had two amazing children. Stephen was born in 1974, followed in 1978 by Kathy. Presto! Family of 4. We left to settle in Victoria, BC, in 1979.

Meg had continued at Nursing off and on in Singapore but when she got to Canada, she had to upgrade to get Registered Nurse status. She went to work in Saanich Peninsula Hospital where, for the next 26 years, she was a staff nurse and a valued member of staff. Margaret was popular with all her patients.

Soon after arriving in Canada Margaret was introduced to camping. This became one of Margaret's new loves and one she was eager to share with her children. Ralph and Margaret bought a VW bus, painted it green and transformed it into a camper. This led to many camping trips all over British Columbia, and the creation of many fond memories for her children and for her parents who also discovered that they loved camping.

This love of the outdoors turned into Beavers and Cub Scouts for Stephen and Brownies for Kathy. Margaret volunteered as a leader for all of these, helping with meetings, bake sales, and bottle drives. She was a dedicated mother and raising Kathy and Stephen was her greatest joy. She always gave as much support as possible to their interests, except when it came to the building of airplanes and submarines which she determined was not a good idea for a 12yr old. It seemed quite unfair at the time watching her cut up my hang-glider but looking back from where I am now, I can see that is part of what made her such a great Mom. No-one could ever accuse Margaret of not loving her children or Ralph to bits.

Margaret's love of family extended beyond her immediate

family. In addition to being very close to her family in Wales—visiting, writing, calling, WhatsApping—she embraced Ralph's family as her own. She welcomed her children's spouses with open arms, and Kathy's mother-in-law became one of her closest friends. Margaret, Meg, Muggie, Queen of the A(untie)-Team, delighted in organizing and hosting garden parties and family holiday gatherings. She was famous for her baking: cakes, lemon bars, minced tarts, and epic butter tarts which she would make by the hundreds in preparation for Christmas. Margaret was also famous for her amazing and intricate gingerbread cathedrals which looked stunning and oh so tasty (at least to the children). Then, after Christmas was over and the decorations were being put away, we would sit down as a family with a hammer and tear into the glorious creation hungrily eating as much old, stale candy as we could salvage. The flavors of the old candy, cookies, and icing were always a letdown after months of salivating, but the memories of those family moments will last forever.

After Margaret retired from nursing she needed to find a new outlet for her overabundance of love and kindness. She found this outlet through volunteering. Meg donated her time for over a decade to the police Victims Services Program, Need Crisis Line, and BC Cancer Society. Retirement gave her time to dote on Ralph, their dog Dylan, her garden where she spent much of her time, and to enjoy walks, as well as many a good cup of tea and coffee with family and friends. Driving up to Mt. Tolmie with Ralph for lunch and to enjoy the view was a favorite excursion. Her greatest retirement joy was, beyond a doubt, being Nana to Lara, Rowyn, and Leo. She loved spending time with them and watching them grow up—are they really already taller than she is?!

Margaret was a wonderful person who was always generous with her time, whether it was volunteering or just sitting down for a cup of tea and a good chat with friends and family. She will be remembered for the love and kindness she spread wherever

she went. She was an exceptional woman who is thought of fondly by everyone who had the pleasure of meeting her wherever she went across the world. With the wisdom of someone who loved her new home in Canada, but missed Wales and her Welsh family, she always reassured her son, who has moved away from Victoria, that exploring is an important part of life and that wherever we were in this world there is still love. It is bittersweet to know that after many years Margaret is back with her parents just as one day we will get to see her again. She will be missed by all.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

www.mccallgardens.com

This obituary is the property of the "Gustafson" family and may not be reproduced, distributed, or altered in any way without prior written consent.