

Mariette Vanderham

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mariette Vanderham who died peacefully in Victoria on September 16, 2016.

Born Mariette Leonie Suttle in Edmonton, Alberta on July 15, 1926, she was the first-born of Eugenie Daignault and Leo Suttle. Her mother had been a teacher before she married, working in one-room prairie schools. Her father Leo worked for Searle Grain and travelled the gravel roads of Saskatchewan dealing with farmers and monitoring grain in the elevators that are now disappearing from the prairies. The family moved around, had a second child, and eventually settled in Saskatoon.

Mariette and her brother Jack went to the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. She graduated as a teacher and taught in Princeton and in Saskatoon. Mariette loved teaching and loved the summer vacations of the profession.

In 1951, she took a summer job at the Jasper Park Lodge where she met the love of her life, the dashing Dutch immigrant Rob Vanderham, who was studying for a degree in Agriculture at the University of Guelph. Mariette was now teaching in Montreal, and they courted long-distance during the coming year, marrying in Saskatoon in 1953. For their honeymoon, they went to Holland where they visited Rob's family, and then travelled in Europe.

While visiting Italy, they received the tragic news of the death of Mariette's only sibling, her brother Jack Suttle, in an Air Force plane crash. She returned early from the honeymoon. Rob's solid love and care helped her live through that devastating time of loss and grief.

Mariette gave birth to her first child the next year in Regina as Rob began work as a scout in the oil business. Her next

four children were born only a year apart, so Mariette was soon caring for five children aged four and under!

During this period, the young family moved frequently as Rob was transferred to various locations in the oil industry, eventually becoming a Landman. They moved between Edmonton and Calgary several times, finally settling in Calgary in 1966. By this time, Mariette and Rob had seven children, five girls and two boys. They remember these years as some of the happiest of their lives. Summer vacations usually included time at casual lake cabins in Windermere or the Okanagan; Mariette loved lakes, having spent summers at Waskasui during her childhood in Saskatchewan. Grandparents cared for the children now and then so Mariette and Rob were able to travel and go on road trips together in Europe, the US and Hawaii.

In 1967, Mariette and Rob bought a beautiful half-section ranch in the high foothills with Joe and Betty Mercier. With 15 children between the two families, the Driftline Ranch was a lively and fun place to spend weekends and summers.

Mariette returned to teaching for a brief stint in 1968, teaching English to Czechoslovakian refugees. She enjoyed this very much, but family was her priority for most of her working life. She was a fierce defender of her family.

In 1983, Mariette and Rob moved out of Calgary to the Highridge Ranch where they lived for the next 3 years. Rob ranched more intensively with a cow-calf operation while still working in the oil business. This was a lonely time for Mariette and too demanding for Rob, so the couple sold this ranch and moved back to Calgary, making their home in Springbank until Rob's retirement. Then in 1993, they moved to Victoria where they enjoyed many happy years.

With family and friends, Mariette and Rob celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in 2013. Their 60 years of love and devotion were lauded by all present. Their lives together

set an example of warmth, humour, tenacity, adventure, and integrity. Both showed great courage in coping with the trials of aging, and acted with care and devotion to one another during the difficult times of ailing health.

Mariette was warm, smart, vivacious and passionate. She loved expressing her ideas and always said what she thought. She loved language, was an avid reader, loved poetry, and wrote clever limericks. She had a great gift for celebrating and making special the events of everyday life.

Mariette is survived and deeply missed by her loving husband Rob, her children Celeste, Paul (Mary Anne), Margot (Michael), Kristine, Mark (Cathy), Maria, Gina, her 15 grandchildren, her five great grandchildren, and her many other relatives and friends.

A Memorial Service will be held at 2 pm on Friday, September 23, 2016 at the Franciscan Friary, 1076 Joan Crescent, Victoria, BC. Reception to follow. The burial will take place at 2 pm Monday, September 26, 2016 at the Town of Okotoks Cemetery, 121 Big Rock Trail, Okotoks, Alberta. Friends welcome.

May you rest in peace dear Mariette. We love you and will hold you in our hearts forever.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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