

Mary Daykin

Mary Daykin passed away on January 7, 2026, at the age of 103, after a long life well lived. Her husband and chess opponent, Harold, with whom she enjoyed a marriage of almost 60 years, had died in 2009. She is survived by their four children: Gail (Garry) Jopko of Rhein, Saskatchewan, Bruce (Wenda) of Victoria, Rachel, of Ocean Falls, and Paul (Rosie) of Vancouver. She will be missed by her 10 grandchildren (Larissa, Katryna, Oren, Taras, Danyllo, Tricia, Ian, Rosie, Linda and India), by her ten great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Mary was born to Nick and Lena Drozdowich on September 18, 1922, and was raised on their farm near Vegreville Alberta along with her four siblings. The local school only went to grade 8, and accordingly Mary finished her formal education when she was only 14. Not long thereafter she was called upon to raise the 3 young children of a neighbouring farmer whose wife had tragically died. She did so without complaint. At 17, on the cusp of the outbreak of World War II, not seeing a future for herself in the farming community, she took a train to Vancouver, where she found accommodation in Kitsilano, enrolled in dressmaking school, and supported herself while working as a nanny and housekeeper to a Shaughnessy family. She fondly remembers her dad travelling by train to visit her in Vancouver, bringing with him a gift of a sewing machine, only to find that he had left his own suitcase at the station.

She met Harold, who had grown up in Kerrisdale and attended UBC, in the youth group at St. Andrew's Wesley United Church. They were wed in 1950 and settled in East Vancouver. During their married life they were leaders in their community, active politically and as members of the congregation and choir at Grace Memorial United Church.

At a party celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, Harold

joked about the division of responsibility in their marriage in this way:

"I was responsible for all the big things, like Canada's immigration policy and whether Vancouver should allow a freeway to be constructed through residential neighbourhoods. Mary was in charge of the little things, like how many children we should have, where we should live and how I should earn a living."

Indeed, Mary was not only in charge of the household but was the ultimate home economist. She baked bread every Monday. She sewed her own clothes and those of her family and customers. She grew fruit and vegetables in the back yard garden and canned preserves throughout the summer and fall. She made quilts from leftover fabric and knitted sweaters, mitts and gloves from donated yarn. She baked pies for church fundraisers. Having both been raised in the Great Depression, she and Harold were frugal by nature. They kept a strict budget, logging every expenditure in a black notebook which they kept in a drawer in the kitchen. But this did not stop them from enjoying nights out together, usually for dinner and a movie downtown.

In a decision that would seem unusual today, Mary insisted that all of her children work on a berry farm during the summers. This helped to instill in each of them a strong work ethic and a sense of financial independence. This summertime activity was interrupted in 1969 when Mary and Harold, having put aside some savings, elected instead of replacing their aging vehicle to take the whole family to Europe. Before Harold was able to join them in Switzerland, Mary led all four of her children, then teenagers, through various countries on Eurail passes, armed only with a pocketful of traveler's cheques and a travel guide ambitiously entitled *"Europe on Five Dollars a Day"*.

The house in East Vancouver was always full of life. In

addition to raising her own children, Mary operated a little day-care operation out of her home, looking after children whose parents worked during the day, many of whom became lifelong friends. And after their older children moved out, Mary and Harold regularly hosted foreign students in their home from Japan, Europe, Mexico and other countries, enlivening dinner-time conversations on topics chosen by Harold.

After Harold retired, he and Mary sold the East Van house and moved to a townhouse in Newton, where they became active members of the Bethany-Newton United Church and enjoyed summers at their cabin on Chain Lake. And after Harold died in 2009, Mary decided to move to Victoria to be closer to Bruce's family and joined St. Aiden's United church there.

If asked to describe Mary, one would say that she was loyal, hard-working, talented and not shy of expressing her opinions. She made friends easily and was never shy to strike up a conversation with a complete stranger. Indeed, the only regret ever expressed by Mary as she grew old is that many of her friends and relatives had died.

No summary of Mary's life would be complete without an account of her athletic achievements. Mary was active in the BC Seniors Games each summer from the age of 70 to 94 and won at least 38 medals in the 5 km and 10 km walking events which were held at cities all over the province. In the early years amidst stiff competition her medals were often bronze, but over time they were usually silver and gold as she got stronger and there was little competition left in the older age groups. Her consistent podium finishes are especially impressive when one considers her diminutive stature and the fact that she was often racing against longer-legged competitors.

Mary would have liked to thank the staff, caregivers and residents of The Cedars, Hart House and Luther Court in

Victoria, who provided the support to make her latter years meaningful. And the whole family wishes to extend our heartfelt thanks to Bruce, Wenda, Tricia and Ian, who have provided loving and constant support and companionship to Mary for the last many years. Mary will be fondly remembered by her family, relatives and friends.

A Memorial Service will be held at Broad View United Church Chapel, 3703 St. Aiden's St., Victoria, BC, on Saturday, February 14th, 2026, at 12:00pm. Please text 250-858-0304 to RSVP.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

www.mccallgardens.com

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