

Rita Snaith (nee Cournoyer)

1908-2013

Rita Snaith died on February 25th, 2013 in Victoria, British Columbia. She was 104 years old.

Rita was born in 1908 on a farm in the French Settlement, just outside the Village of Tweed, Ontario. There were all girls in her family and she became her father's right hand farm helper at age six during the first world war, when most men and boys were overseas. She always said that she started working hard at age six and just never stopped. "I milked 8 cows twice a day until I was eighteen", she said, as well as working with her father in the fields. "I was never afraid of hard work but I knew that I did not want to stay on the farm my whole life". She was the first in her extended family to finish high school and graduated first in her class at Tweed High School. School personnel encouraged her to go on to University but her parents were not able to afford the cost. They did sacrifice to send her for a year to Business College in Toronto where she earned a bookkeeping diploma. She was immediately hired at age 19 by a small but prestigious law firm in Toronto as a bookkeeper, primarily because of her bilingual skills. She worked for the law firm for 16 years, until her first child was born, eventually learning the duties of a paralegal clerk. Rita married Leo Snaith in 1939 and they eventually built a house outside of Toronto on a tract of empty land near the Scarborough Bluffs. Rita and Leo had three children, Mary, Bill and Margaret. When all the children were in school, Rita returned to work as a bookkeeper and office manager for various Toronto businesses. During her last fifteen years of work, she worked part time as the manager of a medical office building in Toronto. She finally retired at age 91 because of declining eyesight. Rita moved to Sidney B.C. in 2001 to live with her daughter, Mary. She continued to be an active and adventurous woman in her 90's, including sailing on a seven

week trip to Alaska on a 53 foot sailboat when she was 95 years old.

Rita is predeceased by her loving husband of 40 years, Leo and her son, Bill. She is survived by daughters, Mary Ott (Richard), Eureka Springs, Arkansas, Margaret Boynton (Jim) Pickering, Ontario and daughter-in-law, Virginia Whittal, Woodslee ,Ontario; grandchildren, Kris Whittal and Jennifer Baker; great grandchildren, Joey Whittal and Mason and Caiden Luciano.

A graveside service will be held in June at Mount Hope Cemetery in Toronto. A celebration of Rita's life will also be held in Victoria and in Tweed with her large extended family. Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Bros. Funeral Home

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