

Selma Pihel (nee Lindström)

In her 100th year, Selma quietly passed away near the sea she loved, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. She led an incredible life. Born in Salmistu, Estonia, on the shores of the Baltic Sea, Selma's days were spent with her siblings: Ida, Ella, Einar, Hermine, Elise, Herald, Walter, Aino, and Evald. During World War II, Estonia was first occupied by the Germans and then the Russians. With three of her siblings, Selma escaped in a small boat to Finland on September 18, 1944, and from there they found safe refuge in Sweden.

Selma soon met a dashing young man named Wambola who was also Estonian. Their daughter Lembi was born in 1946 and they immigrated to Canada in 1950. In Toronto, they eventually settled in East York near a budding Estonian community. While Wambola (or Willie as he was called) worked as an electrician in construction, Selma stayed home with her five daughters. Their spectacular gardens, with wildflowers growing in among perennial favourites, won several East York community beautification awards.

They travelled often and had a particular fondness for cruises and Hawaii. They were also talented artists. When Wambola retired at 65, they attended art classes and experimented with oil and acrylic paints, water colours and sculpture. Both Selma and Wambola were members of the Estonian Artists Association in Toronto, with their art featured in several shows. Not surprisingly, Selma's passion was painting flower bouquets.

Selma and Wambola moved to Barrie, Ontario a few years before her beloved husband passed away in 2004. Reinventing herself, Selma moved to Victoria in 2012 moving into an independent senior's residence on the shores of Juan de Fuca Strait. There, she could see the ocean and watch the cruise ships dock

at the terminal, just steps from her home. Selma continued to paint almost until the very end of a full life with so many wonderful memories that she shared with her daughters and grandchildren when they visited her.

Selma was mother to Lembi (James Buchanan), Helle-Mai aka Helen (Bob Graham), Vaike Rosalea (Alan Atkins), Urve (John Fisgus), and Sarah Pihel (Arnie Branje); a proud grandmother of twenty-two grandchildren, three step-grandchildren, as well as a great grandmother, and a great-great grandmother; who all affectionately called her "Ema". Selma will also be fondly remembered by her dear friend Norma who now lives in Finland.

Visitation will take place at the Steckley-Gooderham Funeral Home, 30 Worsley St., Barrie, Ontario, on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 from 9 -10 am. A Funeral Service will be held in the Chapel, at 10 am. Interment at Barrie Union Cemetery, 338 Sunnisdale Rd., Barrie.

Online condolences may be made at www.steckleygooderham.com.