Stephanie Ahearn Carlson (nee Southam)

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of Stephanie Ahearn Carlson. She died quietly and peacefully in her home in Qualicum Beach, B.C. She was surrounded by the love of her daughters and dear friends, who are all so grateful to have spent time with her before she left.



She is survived by her ‘darling girlies’ Vanessa, Jessie (Ben Yardley), Nancy (Will Jones) and her adored grandchildren; Lily Watters, Lucy, Lila, and Townes Yardley; Cooper and Woodrow Jones, as well as her partner of several happy decades Doug Gordon. She is mourned by her countless friends and extended family members, especially her dear sister Louie.

Stephanie was born to Jean and Gordon Southam on February 12th, 1945. The third of seven children, she grew up in a large and happy home surrounded by invaluable antiques, an enviable art collection, countless cocktail parties and black-tie dinners. The happiest times in her youth were spent at the barn, where she excelled as an accomplished equestrian, winning so many trophies and ribbons that she needed a separate stall to store them all.

A true BC girl, she spent her summers at Qualicum Beach, a tradition that was started before she was born. She and her

siblings would join their grandparents in their summer home on Judges Row. When she married Bruce Carlson, and had 4 girls herself, she would lean over the balcony of ‘the house on the hill’ every night at 5 o’clock and yell “girliiies, dinner time” so loudly that they would run up from the beach and sit down to a perfectly prepared dinner, always including fresh vegetables from the garden.

It goes without saying that all who knew and loved Stephanie would, at some point, comment on her beauty and humour. Even at her sickest moments she would have her girls in uncontrollable laughter with her razor-sharp wit and timing.

She was kind and generous, she gave so much back to the community and causes she cared about. A value she learned from her own family, and one she has passed down to her daughters. In 2015, she was given the Governor-General’s Caring Canadian Award for her work with British Columbia Children’s Hospital and Foundation, along with many other accolades both civically and provincially. She leaves behind a legacy of philanthropy and community service. She left an indelible mark on the communities and organizations that she lived in and served.

A celebration of Mum’s life will be held at Christ Church Cathedral, 690 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, at 3:00 pm on Thursday April 4th, 2024. Doug and her girls invite everyone to join them at a reception immediately following the service.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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