Wendy Ellen Russell

It is with great sadness to announce that Wendy Ellen Russell, aged 87, passed away peacefully on the evening of May 4th, 2025, in Victoria, British Colombia, with family by her side. Wendy Ashby was born 8th of February 1938 in Calgary, Alberta, to Ellen (Roberton) Ashby and Judge Denzil Ashby, who served with the RCMP and the BC judiciary. In 1948 the Ashby's together with Wendy's siblings Rosemary and John, moved to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, settling first in Victoria and then Sidney where the Ashby's Resthaven home was known for its award-winning garden and beautiful roses.



Wendy and Rosemary moved to London in 1957 where Wendy was employed at Harrods' exotic animal department. It was at Harrods that Wendy met the love of her life – Peter Russell. Wendy returned home the following year and joined the Sport Car Club, driving a black MG TC sports car, often accompanied by her pug, Itty Bitty. Peter soon followed and they married in 1961.Their first son, Paul, was born in 1963 and his brother Michael (1965-2013) followed two years later.

In 1974, Wendy opened an antique shop specializing in Asian treasures, with a special fondness for Kakiemon and netsukes. Four years later, Wendy joined forces with her sister Rosemary Wells and opened a store renowned for fine estate jewelry, Georgian silver and glass, paintings and Chinese bronzes. The shops logo was easily recognized for its ornate overlapping

initials RW WR. Situated on Victoria's Antique Row, it was more than just a destination known for remarkable finds, it became an eclectic meeting place for friends, collectors, connoisseurs and the curious. Rosemary and Wendy Antiques was also renowned for its wonderful window displays by William "Wild Willy" Patterson, the lavish holiday party's every December, and the not-so-secret but always appreciated servings of sherry in teacups. Another employee at the shop was the young intern, Michael Prokopow, who went on to great things and held a special place in Wendy's heart. In 1980, Wendy and Rosemary moved the shop to a larger premises on Broughton Street where they remained until Rosemary retired to Nepal. Wendy's business continued in Maclure's Temple Building on lower Fort Street, before later joining forces with respected dealer Leonard Clark at his shop in the 800 block of Fort Street.

Wendy retired in 2015, but her good taste in all things beautiful and the hunt for hidden treasures continued, regularly perusing downtown charity shops. Wendy moved to Oak Bay's Carlton House in 2023, loving the location, new camaraderie, and renewed friendship with Frances Pook.

Wendy's heart revolved around her family, her loved husband Peter and adored sons Paul and Michael. The circle of love grew with Paul and first wife Sue Gray, with their son Zachary Russell (the light of Wendy's life) and Chelsea Russell, Paul's cherished spouse. Wendy's nieces Hilary (Wells) White of Singapore and Adrienne (Wells) Macaulay of Edinburgh held a special place in her life and heart. Wendy's love of travel took her on many adventures, with the Russell's regularly travelling to the Hawaiian Islands and Barbados. Wendy's love of music attracted her to the opera houses of San Francisco, New York and London, often in the company of close friends Helga Past, Sandy & John Shand, and the Friends of the Belfry. Wendy also enjoyed the warm and welcoming homes of Anne Chorley of Stanley Gardens in London and Michael Cullens in

Mexico.

Wendy's adventurous spirit also took her to Australia, Indonesia, New Orleans, the Yukon, Quebec and Haida Gwaii.

Wendy will be remembered for her kind words and big heart, enduring consideration for others, perpetual positivity, wonderful style and good taste, infectious laugh and love of life.

Wendy is survived by Paul, Chelsea, Zach and spouse Sarah, Hilary and family, Adrienne and family, and nieces Dawne, Trisha, Lesley, Helena and nephew Dean, and dear friends Sharon Lynn Jayatunge and Michael Prokopow.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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