



REMEMBERING
Gisela Mundel

November 6, 1915 - April 27, 2012



Gisela Helene Mundel passed away peacefully at Sunnybank, her much appreciated home of the past year, on Friday, April 27, 2012. She was ninety-six. In her own words, she was "not sick, just very, very old". And she was not alone. With the presence and all the good wishes of family, friends and caring professionals surrounding her, she died knowing she was loved.

For Gisela, so gentle and strong, daily joy and gratitude were habits of the mind. She shared with so many the inevitable challenges of living through the dislocation, loss, fear, uncertainty, hunger, and new beginnings of dramatic refugee experiences and all else that came with two world wars. Gisela tackled such adversity by developing both the physical and mental stamina required. She never wasted time on cynicism, or complaints. You could trust her to seek out and bond with the good in others.

Having immigrated to Oliver from a war-ravaged Europe in 1951, she rolled up her sleeves and set to the tasks at hand: raising six children (passing on the inherited songs, literature, German language and Baltic customs to them and simultaneously supporting them in all aspects of their Canadian schooling), all the while working alongside husband Hans-Erich in the orchard to make ends meet.

First connections with the people of Oliver came through the welcoming, thriving congregation at St. John's Lutheran Church. Unexpectedly, over a decade later, at age 48, Gisela was embraced by an even larger community. When several women with young children heard that the packinghouse sorter beside them was a trained Montessori Kindergarten teacher from Latvia, they encouraged her to establish a kindergarten in Oliver. From 1963 to 1978 she taught all the five-year-olds in our town. Since then, everyone seems to know "Mrs. Mundel". Her wise, kind and energetic ways of engaging the youngsters became legendary. And when, in the

past five years, people saw an elderly lady emerging from Heritage House, decked out with her white sun hat, striding gracefully with her walker, smiling at passers-by and enjoying the beauty of the outdoors, they would wave at her and point her out to their grandchildren, "That was my kindergarten teacher!"

Retirement for Gisela and Hans-Erich had meant hosting a thirty-year extended "open house" for friends and family up in their little haven on the hillside north of town. In her final years, a great joy for Gisela was trying to keep track of the photos of her "offspring", including 23 or so grandchildren and 25 or so great-grandchildren, plus even a great-great-grandchild, not to mention the occasional families who just adopted her as their matriarch!

Gisela was pre-deceased by her son, Holger, her sister Inga Radecki, her great-grandson, Liam, and her husband, Hans-Erich. She will be greatly missed by her family with its many extensions among the Parks, Stiedas, Hahns, Radeckis, Hentzelts and Mundels and by all, near and far, who got to know her.

Funeral service will be held at 10:00 A.M. Sunday May 6, 2012 at the Oliver Lutheran Centre.

Condolences and tributes may be directed to the family by visiting www.nunes-pottinger.com

Arrangements entrusted to Nunes-Pottinger Funeral Service & Crematorium, Oliver & Osoyoos.

