



REMEMBERING
Mildred Downing

January 19, 1925 - November 29, 2014



After living a life overflowing with love, strength and tenderness, Mildred Downing (nee Waugh) passed away peacefully, surrounded by loved ones, on the evening of November 29, 2014 in Osoyoos, BC.

Mildred's beautiful life began in South Vancouver, BC, when she was born to Mary Ann (nee McKenzie) and William Waugh, on January 19, 1925. Three years later, Mildred and her family were heartbroken when their beloved young Mother, Mary Ann, passed away at the age of 33.

Mourning the loss of her dear Mother, deep in her heart, Mildred always longed to create Love, Home and Family wherever she went - and, so, as we all have witnessed, she went about doing that every day of her life.

While growing up in the Lower Mainland area, Mildred was cared for by siblings and various relatives. She deeply loved her sisters and brothers and shared many special memories with them.

After completing high school, Mildred worked at St. Paul's Hospital and Seaboard Shipping. Then, one starry West Coast night, Mildred met the love of her life - Alfred Downing - at a dance in Vancouver. It was love at first sight for them both and, after their courtship, the two sweethearts married on September 11, 1948. They honeymooned on their way to Toronto, where Alfred would study and complete his degree in Optometry. While in Toronto, Mildred worked for Crown Insurance and created a cozy newlywed home. As they worked to build their life and optometric practice together, Mildred and Alfred were overjoyed to watch their family grow with the arrival of their beloved children: Janice, in Toronto, Maureen and Nancy, in Princeton, and Ralph, in Oliver.

In 1958, Mildred and Alfred built their lovely Lake Osoyoos home, where they spent

the rest of their years together. This love-filled home is where Mildred and Alfred cherished countless tea times and beach picnics with their four children, 14 grandchildren, numerous great-grandchildren, as well as many other friends and family members. This warm home is where Mildred filled each memorable family birthday and holiday with delicious cooking and baking, as well as handmade clothes and gifts, never missing a heartfelt detail. With a knack for making any living thing grow and thrive, Mildred spent many sunny moments, over the years, in the Downing garden, among her prized roses and other blooms - often while happily admiring her family's playful pet cats or dog, Cocoa.

Biking, hiking, swimming, canoeing, camping, skiing and travelling across Canada and the USA (California, especially), were some of the many favourite pastimes Mildred and Alfred shared with each other and their family, friends and pets.

A talented alto and soprano sax player, Mildred delighted in playing music since she was a child. In fact, she and her school band played for a Royal Audience: King George VI and Queen Elizabeth during the dedication of the Lions Gate Bridge in May of 1939. She continued to play with bands for dances and, later on in life, she was part of the legendary Osoyoos Big Band - "The Stanley Steamers" - with her husband joining in on drums. Music made her heart sing and you could always hear it in her home.

Fine art, poetry and prose flowed infinitely from Mildred's heart and hands; it was all filtered through her sparkling blue eyes, which smiled at the world and witnessed love all around. Her ability to sketch and paint pictures of loved ones, nature, and, of course, her much-anticipated Christmas cards - brought joy to so many. Writing was also deeply cathartic for Mildred, who was a prolific wordsmith and life-long learner; many lauded the wit and wonder she weaved with ink and paper. True communication with others - listening and sharing from the heart - was always so important to her; Mildred's gentle voice, sweet laughter and soft kisses communicated pure love.

Love is what poured from Mildred's heart to the world, her whole life: love of family, love of friends, love of nature, love of art, love of music, love of learning, love of humanity and love of God. She valiantly faced all of life's challenges with courage, honesty, deep reflection and healing; she celebrated life with joy and grace. Now, Mildred is so deeply missed by her loved ones - but her resilient, strong, creative, kind, generous and loving Spirit continues to live on in the hearts and minds of those who love her. She is the Love in Our Lives and - with her warm-hearted smile and tender heart - she watches over us, always.

Mildred Downing is survived by her beloved husband, Dr. Alfred Downing, and their four children Janice (Al), Maureen (George), Nancy, and Ralph. She is also survived by 14 grandchildren Christy (Rodney), Catherine (Dallas), Paul (Windy), Lisa (Josh), Joanna (Matthew), Stephen (Gabrielle), Mike (Dana), Colleen (Steve), Shauna (Brad), Laura, Annalisa (Jordan), Amy (Andrew), Andrew, and Ian, as well as 20 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brothers, Allan and Ken, and countless other dear nieces, nephews, family and friends. She was predeceased by her Mother Mary Ann Waugh, Father William Waugh, sisters Edna and Vera, and infant brother, Andrew.

A family service was held in memory of Mildred Downing at St. Christopher's Anglican Church in Osoyoos on Wednesday, December 3, 2014.

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

