



**REMEMBERING**  
**Stella Weatherill**

May 25, 1918 - August 24, 2017



After three days of feeling unwell, Stella Weatherill got up early on Thursday morning, dressed, and sat reading her Financial Post. Her daughter Sheelagh was arriving in the afternoon and she wanted to be ready to greet her. Sadly, Stella's passion for life and her determination to be her best were overwhelmed by her physical frailty. She died quietly at 12:15 pm, several hours before her daughters were able to get to her bedside.

Stella was the youngest daughter of Alex and Rose Gilmer of Bangor, Northern Ireland. In 1924, at the invitation of Rose's brother Wilson Neill, the Gilmers left Ireland with their two daughters, 9 year-old Mary and 6 year-old Stella. What an adventure awaited them - the pristine Okanagan Valley that invited development. Alex bought land 2miles from the Acre Lots in Oliver and began growing ground crops while he waited for his fruit trees to bear fruit. From their elegant house close to family in Bangor, the Gilmers joyfully moved into a very small house with electricity but no indoor plumbing. Rose cut off her long hair, gave up her elegant dresses, and rolled up her sleeves. Sadly, she only lived for three more years, leaving her two girls to be raised by their father and whatever female immigrants reached out to them.

By 1939, Mary, now married to Dr. Norbert Ball, gave birth to a baby girl, Sandra (Brooke). Stella married John Hope from Vancouver, who shortly thereafter joined the war effort. When John was shipped overseas in 1942, Stella returned to Oliver to live with her sister Mary in the Ball's apartment over Dr. Ball's surgery. The Hope's first child, Sheelagh (Manheim) was born in 1943 and joined her cousins Sandra and Norbert in their nursery. After John returned home, the Hope's moved to Vancouver where John resumed his banking career with CIBC. John and Stella's second daughter, Leslie, was born in 1947.

The Okanagan never stopped calling to Stella, so when her Uncle Wilson Neill was ready to sell his orchard in 1956, the Hopes left for Oliver and a new life on an orchard near Dead Man's Lake. Stella remembers these as the happiest years of her life, full of hard work and opportunities for her talents to flourish.

John died in 1982 and a year later Stella married Harry Weatherill of Vernon. They lived in a beautiful lakefront home in Osoyoos, where they regularly hosted Stella's granddaughters for swimming, canoeing, and lovely Okanagan summers. For 15 years, Stella and Harry had a lot of fun travelling and entertaining friends and family. When he died, Stella moved into a spacious condo overlooking Osoyoos Lake where she lived until this January.

Stella celebrated her 95th birthday at the California homestead of her daughter Leslie Gislason. There she was surrounded by a sea of descendants, including two daughters, (Sheelagh Manheim, and Leslie Gislason), four granddaughters, (Catriona Briger and Hillary Urich, Dr. Sarah O'Loughlin, and Catherine Kelly) and eight great grandchildren (Maya and Ally Urich, Oliver and Hazel Briger, Kate, Natalie, Charlotte and Alex O'Loughlin) and spouses (Dr. Lee Gislason, Sam Briger, Kelly Urich, Matt O'loughlin and Chris Kelly). Her niece Sandra Brooke and her husband Dick Brooke, QC, retired judge, joined in the celebration.

In July of this year, Stella was delighted when Catherine Kelly's two year-old son Caden was joined by a brother, Colin. "Now the family is complete," Stella said with a satisfied smile.

We saw Stella as resilient, determined, intelligent, and fiercely independent. We were delighted with her sense of fun and adventure.

A very modest woman, Stella would be the last to tell you that she was a master gardener, a championship golfer, a competitive tennis player, a gracious hostess, and a formidable mother and grandmother. As the matriarch, Stella was a draw to her family and friends who were spread widely across Canada and the United States. They came to the Okanagan as often as possible, only to leave feeling that they had not had enough time with this wise, playful, and warm woman. To say that she will be missed is an understatement; yet, she will be with us forever because of all that we have learned from her.

Condolences and tributes may be directed to the family by visiting [www.nunes-pottinger.com](http://www.nunes-pottinger.com)

