



## **REMEMBERING Wilma Corriveau**

October 14, 1939 - January 30, 2019



Roderick, Brian and Grant Corriveau are deeply saddened to announce the sudden and unexpected passing of their beloved Mother, Wilma Jean Corriveau. Mom's beloved siblings, Marion, Patricia and Laird join us in conveying this sad announcement. Mom, who appeared to be in pretty good health, died from an apparent undiagnosed, and untreated, aortic aneurysm that resulted in aortic dissection and her untimely but peaceful death. Mom (Wilma) was born at home in Oliver, B.C., on October 14, 1939. She grew up in a Scottish-Canadian household on an orchard three miles north of Oliver, a homestead that her parents, Wallace and Katie Smith, established after they fell on hard economic times during the Great Depression. Wilma pursued her first year of college at the high school in Oliver, and her second year at the University of Victoria where she boarded with a fisherman's family and ate salmon literally every day. She then landed her first teaching job in Quesnel where she taught grade 1. In 1961 Mom took a trip for a lifetime with her friends Muriel, Robin, and Sue, departed from Quesnel on a Greyhound bus on July 2 for a 6-week adventure across nine Canadian provinces as well as Detroit, Chicago, and New York. Highlights included the Empire State Building, the United Nations, the Catskills, YWCAs everywhere, with sweltering summer heat and no air conditioning, much swimming and a little ice cream, lifelong favorites of Wilma. This trip introduced her to a bigger world, and, even more than the life she was used to, a world with rigid rules for women and discrimination against women who didn't conform to those rules. Examples included being refused breakfast at the YWCA in Halifax because she and her friends wore slacks (they rode the bus and the ferry to PEI hungry - in Wilma's diary she wrote "such a regulation seems absurd"), and they were kicked off the Plains of Abraham for wearing shorts, then refused dinner at the Quebec City YWCA where they were staying for the same reason. After teaching in Quesnel, Wilma moved to Fort St. John where she continued to teach,

and where she met and married Albert Corriveau, a handsome French-Canadian fellow. Unlike Mom, who had been raised as a protestant, Dad was a Roman Catholic, which she and he didn't mind at all, and Dad's family was full of love for her. All the same it was a break from convention and offered its own challenges which my parents gladly overcame. She was a good influence on her husband, providing capital and the steady hand necessary to launch a successful business with her energetic and skilled husband, ALCO Services, for which Wilma was the bookkeeper for many years. They had 3 sons, Roderick, Brian, and Grant. During 25 years of marriage Wilma experienced great success in raising her boys, and financial success came as well. At the same time, she endured, with exceptional grace, strength and compassion, difficult and humbling challenges at home. After the boys were well on their way, and after the divorce, she completed her third year of University and went back to teaching in Fort St. John. She taught special education this time, for about 10 years, after which she chose to retire. Wilma then moved back to Oliver in 1998 into a house across the street from her sister, Marion, who was a beloved companion, helping hand and a resource for Wilma for the rest of her days. Wilma restarted her life in 1998 with great vigor, including becoming an avid and knowledgeable birder, travelled with Marion and others to many different places and countries for birding such as Long Island in New York, Belize, Costa Rica, and Washington State. In the Okanagan itself she helped Marion maintain nest boxes for blue birds. She vacationed in Turkey, Scotland, Vieques, Mexico, Hawaii, Cuba, the Galapagos, and many other places. She managed the Oliver Red Cross office for about 10 years, helped organize annual get togethers with her high school class, and in recent years volunteered at the local college to tutor English as a second language to individuals, up until the day before she passed. Wilma always wanted to live independently and with grace, and did until the very end. Mom was playful, always wanting to bring levity and fun to situations, including cute remarks and silly jokes. At the same time she had a quiet fierceness about her priorities that included her family and her own independence. While too soon to say goodbye, we take solace in the fact that she lived her way until the very last day, she lived well, and with humility, including a (very) few human flaws. Wilma is survived by her loving family including her son Roderick and his partner Salvatore, her son Grant, her son Brian and his wife Nicole and their children Emma, Liam, and Lucy, by her sisters Marion and Patricia and husband Paul, by her brother Laird and wife Nelly, by her ex-husband's siblings Helen Leduc, Diane Scott and her husband Tom, and by Raymond Corriveau and his wife Barb, and by many nieces, nephews and their children. We miss her every day. A memorial ceremony will be held in Oliver, B.C., on Saturday February 9th at Medici's from 11 am to 4 pm, followed by interment of the ashes. Donations are gratefully accepted for the South Okanagan Rehabilitation Center for Owls, Box 1166, Oliver B.C., VOH 1T0. Medici's is available to receive flowers starting at 9 am on February 9th.

