

Ila "Lee" Baxter

DECEMBER 24, 2022

It is with fond and tender hearts that we announce the peaceful passing of Ila Lee ("Lee") Baxter (nee Holdright) on Christmas Eve, at long-term care home, Haro Park, in Vancouver, BC, age 86. Lee was born in 1936, second child to the late Hazen and Lillian (White) Holdright, in the small town of Maitland Bridge, Nova Scotia. It was here that she first met her late husband, Joseph Cormac Baxter. Lee and Joe grew up together, attended the same one-room schoolhouse; they later became sweethearts and were married on October 30, 1959, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.



Lee is survived by her two children, Christopher and Janet (Keith Provost), by her sister, Jocelyn (Larry) Smith, and brother, Louis (Joan) as well as her beloved grand-cat, Percy. In addition to her husband of over 60 years, Lee is predeceased by her brothers Seyward, Roger, and Glenford, by her son-in-law, Keith, and by many cherished pets.

Eager to be independent and start working, Lee left high school after grade 10 and went on to earn her stenographer certificate from Bridgewater Commercial School in 1953. She worked as a secretary for many years, first in Ontario, then Nova Scotia, and finally in British Columbia where she moved with her family in 1970. Before Lee retired, she worked as a taxi driver in Kamloops, BC. For some of her regular customers she would become an advocate, supplying them with food and clothing, finding lodgings, and even confronting landlords who would take advantage of them.

Lee will be remembered for her gentle and generous heart, mischievous sense of humour, and hearty laugh. Her smile could light up the room. She had an abiding love of animals and took in an assortment of strays throughout her life including ducklings, pigeons, and even a cedar waxwing that travelled with the family across Canada. Lee spoke fluent “chickadee” and was often heard chatting with the feathered friends that visited her balcony in Vancouver.

In her spare time, Lee was an avid golfer, famously beating her husband by a stroke for the top spot in the Kamloops annual teachers' tournament (she was “a natural athlete”, we often joked). She was also a shrewd card player, relentless bargain hunter, loving mother, devoted wife, and was renowned for her clam chowder and sauerkraut stew.

The family are deeply grateful for the steadfast care that Lee received from the wonderful staff at Haro Park where she spent her final years. After moving in, in 2019, Lee was so taken with the place that she asked for permission to be allowed to stay. As Lee’s dementia progressed, and her abilities became diminished, her smile could still be found, especially when she was in the presence of children and animals.

As per Lee’s request, there will be no service. Donations can be made in Lee’s name to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) or to the Alzheimer Society of British Columbia.

Condolences and memories about Lee can be left below and are much appreciated.

Messages of Condolence

Sending the tightest hug and our sincere condolences.

Cherish all your precious memories Bax.

— **Suzette and Ken**

Janet, Louis and I send you and Chris our condolences for the loss of your Mom.

Please know our thoughts are with you.

— **Louis and Joan Holdright**

I had not heard about your Mom's passing until an old school friend from Parrsboro called me today. Chris- you were the "mascot" of our school basketball team and we all took turns carrying you around Janet! Your Mom was always there to cheer us on whatever sport we were playing. I have many fond memories of your days in Parrsboro. It was great to meet up with them a couple of times when we camped at Keji with our kids. Sincere sympathy in your loss.

— **Celia Burns**

Your father was my gym teacher when I was in junior high school in Parrsboro. Your mother was always there cheering on whatever team happened to be playing on that particular day. She always had a big smile on and appeared to be enjoying herself while supporting your father at the same time. Take comfort in your many fond memories of your mother and your father; I am sure there were many adventures during your years of growing up with both of them!

— **Tanya MacDonadl**



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