

Ruth Marla Chatham

NOVEMBER 30, 2019



With gratitude for all the lives she has touched with her love, we announce the parting of (Ruth) Marla Chatham, born in 1927 and passing on November 15, 2019 in Abbotsford B.C.

Born to Frank and Effie Shepherd, Marla had one dear sister, Evelyn, who was almost 6 years younger than her. Her early years were lived in Alberta but the family also spent time in Vancouver with Effie's family. Marla met Bert (Herbert Ernest Chatham) during one of these Vancouver visits, when she was 8 years old. Their long friendship eventually lead to their marriage in 1952.

Marla taught in Prince George and Dawson Creek before her marriage and when she returned to teaching after starting a family, she taught and mentored in the commerce department at the high school in Chetwynd. The Chathams later moved to Prince George where Marla continued to teach and in the later part of her career became a high school counselor. The family appreciates all the lovely testimonies from her former students, identifying her as someone who affected their lives in a remarkably positive way.

After retirement Marla and Bert moved to Sechelt B.C. Bert passed away in 1995 but Marla continued living on the Sunshine Coast, and she liked to point out that this was the place where she lived the longest of any period in her life. She began volunteering in many organizations and made a big impact in her community. She always said that she liked the 'doing' part of volunteerism best. She also loved walking the beaches and forest trails, playing bridge and tending her garden. She had 10 happy years with her companion, Ray Williston while living on the coast.

During the last 10 years of her life Marla came to live in Abbotsford to be closer to her family. While she struggled with dementia, she was lovingly supported by her daughter and other members of her family. She had adult grandchildren and young great grandchildren in her life during this time who brought her a lot of joy and with whom she was able to share her never-ending capacity to love. She will be remembered for her contagious smile and her wonderful sense of humour.

Family was always important to Marla. She was a much loved mother to Lois, Ernie (Debby) and Roy (Linda) Chatham. She adored her grandchildren, Christa (Ryan) Rachwalski, Aaron (Sandi) Labrum, Lindsay, Melissa, Byron and Laura Chatham, Jennifer and Craig Storey. Her Great Grandchildren, Evan, Grace, Rachel, Faith, Colby, Ashley, Alexis, and Matilda brought so much joy to their Nana and it was wonderful to see them together. After her move to Abbotsford that was a regular occurrence.

The family will be having a private celebration of life for Marla in the new year. We also plan to plant trees in her honor as she was a lover of the environment all her life.

The Chatham family would like to extend our deep appreciation to the staff of Cottage Pavilion care home for the wonderful care they gave to Mom in her last years of life.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

Messages of Condolence

The world needed, and needs, more wonderful “Marla’s”. RIP my mentor and friend.

— **Ardith Brownlee (nee McQueen)**

Your mother was one of the warmest and most caring people we have had the pleasure of knowing. I know you will miss her ever-smiling face and sunny personality.

Jeanne Moffat

Rhonda, Andy Smith, and boys

Tracy, Trevor Heinze, and girls

— **Jeanne Moffat**

I always enjoyed seeing Mrs Chatham (Marla) over the years, such a kind and full of life person. Condolences to the family, may the memories of her life comfort you.

— **Kathy**

Marla was such a great person, I remember her as our Brownie leader as well as school in Chetwynd. So sorry for your loss.

From Laura Caton and Vivian Tod

— **Laura Lee (Tod) Caton**

Let perpetual light shine on her O Lord, may she rest in everlasting peace. Prayers for consolation and comfort to family and friends. Every life she touched was blessed by supernatural grace. A rare and precious soul in full bloom all her days. Beloved Mrs. Chatham, teacher and advocate of your students. you live on in our hearts and treasured memories.

— **Ruth Kurjata**

Condolences to all of Mrs Chatham's family. Such a beautiful person and teacher, loved by many. Always a smile for everyone. She will be missed by all who were lucky enough to know her.

— **Aline Ethier**

Marla Chatham, thanks for the wonderful memories from high school, you had a huge impact on me. It was so amazing to meet up with you later in life as your family joined my family! Watch over all of us! We miss you in this life!

— **terry ruesch (houde)**

Had it not been for Mrs. Chatham my life would have been even more bleak and I know I would not have finished highschool. She stayed and taught in Chetwynd and once told me she was not moving until I graduated. That's dedication. Mrs. Chatham didn't just teach classes. She knew each of her students intimately and taught children, taught people, not classes. Her ready smile and cheerful presence left an incredibly positive influence in my life. In my 12 year, I had no idea what I wanted to do. Mrs. Chatham suggested I should study computers, somehow she felt I had "mind for it". I finally did, but it was much later, 20 years later...and she was right. I loved my work and it was the best thing I ever did. I didn't much care for any of my teachers, but Mrs. Chatham I respected and loved.

— **Anna Westgate**

She was certainly a special person and we loved her dearly...anyone who could survive this group of Maritimers HAD to be special. Thanks for your memories and ours!

Jean and Capt.

— **Jean and Theodore Williston**



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