

Marilyn Louise Cram

MARCH 7, 2021

"In the Mystery of every season, may you discover with passion and share with compassion". Words Marilyn lived by as well as wrote on her special cards. MC



Marilyn was born June 12, 1951 in Kindersley, Sask, Toronto til 1955 where Don saved her from a kitty, which was actually a skunk, then Port Arthur til 1966, teen years in Chilliwack, which became her home base for life. Marilyn was predeceased by her parents, Betty and Gord Cram, and Nephew Trevor Nelmes. Survived by her siblings Don (Esther) Cram, Marcia (Doug) Wright, Heather (Gord) Leyen and Step Mom Annette Cram and Aunt Betty. Marilyn was so proud of her Nieces and Nephews, if skiing allowed she attended all their special occasions, lol. Lori (Joel), Daniel (Esther), Jodi (Norm), Jeremiah (Cherie), Andre, Grant (Nicole), Shane (Cadence) and Max and her surrogate niece Sarah. The Great Nephews and Nieces - Conor, Tyson, Cameron, Zhayra, Lily, Sage, Christianna, Evangelique', Ethan, Wyatt, Maya and Anastasia. Karl Ricker became her devoted companion into her challenging later years. Her special cousin Fran sent countless letters and love over their whole lives. Marilyn was active, vibrant and passionate about life. Her family and friendships enriched her life while they shared their different passions together.

Growing up in Northern Ontario was wonderful: Trinity United Church, sewing, piano, ping pong, games, teaching Heather school, playing in McVicar Creek, berry picking, Quetico camping, canoeing, competitive swimming, water skiing, saunas,

SNOW and lots of it, snow play, skiing, skating and ice fishing. Loved Hockey night on TV, and the movie Pollyanna was an attitude she lived by. Moving to BC was a new adventure, no snow at Christmas meant we had to find snow, our exploring took us to Silver Tip, Manning, Hemlock and Mt. Baker. Marilyn graduated at CSSS, lifeguarded and taught swimming to put herself through university. Mt. Baker became her mountain home with Dad & Mom, Steve & Dee, Brock (all previously deceased) Annette, Hannu & Bernie, Ben & June, Eric & Shirley, Phil and Liz Lang, Maelle (banked slalom) and Mika. Horne Lake was her summer home where she spent countless hours with her Wright family. Carman United Church was her indoor place to worship, and God provided her outdoor church with Nature. She genuinely loved and explored as much of this beautiful country as she could and was proud to be a Canadian. A friend said "She had a heart as big as the outdoors she loved."

A UBC grad in PT & OT. She made lifelong friends at UBC -Janna (deceased), Kathy, Melanie and Nonie. She practiced in Vancouver, did the challenging job with Canadian Arthritis CARS, a mobile program in the Prince George area, Vedder Physio with her wonderful friend Marilyn B, then private practice in Chwk focusing on home visits. To help fulfill her love of skiing, she worked for 4 winters in the Laundry for CMH - Hans (deceased) & Margaret and many staff including her new European friends Reingard and Anna. The harder she worked, the more heli-skiing vertical she enjoyed, and again helping others by playing the role of tail guide.

For over 20 years Marilyn was very fulfilled with her work as PT/OT with Student Services in Chilliwack where she gained well earned respect and admiration from her colleagues Alice, Donna, Edna, Jann, Linda, Nancy and Pat. At student services she was able to explore her passion for working with children with special needs and developed lasting relationships with many, Paul, Sarah, Elizabeth, Angel and countless others. INCLUSIVITY was always her goal. And, of course, the

flexibility of her student services work allowed her to chase fresh snow days in winter and explore the wilderness in the summer. Retiring in June 2011.

Marilyn was a water baby from day one, she could not even be left alone near water as she crawled right in, she became a polar bear swimmer in the frigid waters of Lake Superior as a child, and took every opportunity to dip in glacial pools, rivers, lakes & oceans. Swimming in the Arctic Ocean, off Baffin Island, shores of Newfoundland and Halifax Bay, just a few spots in the Atlantic and the Pacific waters off Haida Gwaii, Vancouver Island, Pacific Northwest, and the warm ocean waters around Mexico and Hawaii. When she was not swimming, she paddled and paddled, with her last big paddle being the Thelon River, a remote 30day paddle. She annually participated in World Rivers Day. Her travels took her to Europe more than once, seeking her CMH mountain friends and sharing in their mountain adventures. Marilyn honed her back country skills ski touring, especially enjoying her Selkirk Mountain Experience family Reudi, Nicoline, Charlotte & Florina, and many other group trips combining touring and crosscountry skiing. Also walking, biking, hiking and paddling all over BC, from her neighbourhood Heron Reserve, to Haida Gwaii, Nootka Island, Vancouver Island and as many ranges in BC as she could. Carol and Karl's research found that over 5 decades Marilyn had been on 130 trips and reached 139 mountain tops.

She was an honorary life member of the Chilliwack Outdoor Club and nurtured more special relationships - Christine M, Elly, Heinz & Emilee, Lydia, Marilyn B, Monica, Nora, Sheryl, Sylvia & Theo, Frank & Kate, the Grangers, Helen, Rayna, Ron, Ruth and MANY MANY more. BCMC friends Carol, Ellen, Evelyn, Jack, Karl and Liz to name a few, did many extreme trips and treks together. She was not a leader, but she was known for her amazing strength, stamina and positive outlook. Marilyn was a longtime member of the Nature Chilliwack - Helen, Janne and Rose, sharing slide shows, education and stewards of their property.

FAMILY TIME definitely was a major part of all seasons for Auntie Marilyn, from Auntie sitting, trips together, family dinners, reunions, ski days, hiking and water activities- paddling, skiing, synchronized swimming and free fun water play. She was proud to share her home, never tiring of her view or neighbourhood. She enjoyed so many things such as gardening, collecting hazelnuts, sewing, clothing exchanges, spinning, weaving, sketching, calligraphy, journaling, letter writing, rocks, flora & fauna, trees, birds, wildlife (all things outdoors) and photography. Marilyn created beautiful cards, writing heartfelt personal messages whether it was about loss or celebration. She combined her sketches and/or her photographs taking the recipients with her on her memorable adventures. She absolutely loved attending get-togethers from breakfast gatherings, tailgate picnics, potlucks, and formal celebrations. Marilyn wasn't known for her cooking skills, but made wonderful rhubarb crisps, maybe a little shy on the sugar, always watching the calories. She loved music, dancing, singing, piano, and live theatre. She played a few bars on a keyboard a couple of weeks before she passed away. Don and Esther played piano, sang, and prayed with Marilyn via facetime through many months of the Pandemic. She shared a great respect for Indigenous cultures and learned about their various artforms and plants and their uses.

Willing to help whenever possible with family, friends, or strangers. Marilyn had a very strong faith and exemplified the qualities of love, kindness, sharing, and forgiveness. Her Carman church family included dear friends Art (deceased) and Marg, Christine, Doug and Katie, Janne, Leone (deceased), Michelle, Rose, and Sylvie. Marilyn was always giving of herself, Cultus Lake Church camp, Carmen's Junior Elders, Healing Pathway, outings with students, lending her home to others in need, trail repairs, equipment repairs, first aid skills, PT/OT advice and assisting in building of mountain huts.

Marilyn was Our Unique Gal. Timeless - composting in the 70's, using reusable grocery bags, yoga (Ruby) and daily stretching in the 80's and forever, always

conscious of waste and consumption, a minimalist.

Ironically, Marilyn had a very good memory. Alzheimer's slowly began around 2014, despite progressive symptoms she continued her adventures with Karl until she went into full time care in the Cheam Unit of Heritage Village January 2018. These last 3 years were never part of anyone's plan. Thank goodness for the continued love and support from so many dear friends and family, even when reciprocation was simply no longer possible. A Big Thank You to **ALL** the caring staff at Heritage Village, Dr. Markey and Dr Wolfe. She surprised the staff with her agility in the beginning, and in time the Cheam Unit was home, where she would brighten the day with her gentle soul and big smile. Sadly, in the end, Marilyn's illness had extinguished her bright eyes and wonderful smile. A SMILE is the simplest gift you can give others, and Marilyn's BIG SMILE was unforgettable. We realize we have probably missed names, our apologies! We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the dozens of warm wishes that have been sent to Marilyn over the last few years and we are absolutely awestruck by ALL the beautiful condolences, stories, and photos that we have received over the last few weeks. THANK YOU ALL!

We hope to have a celebration of Life in June, it is possible this could be postponed.

Please consider a Donation in Marilyn's memory to -

The Mission & Service Fund, United Church of Canada OR Carman United Church,
□ Carman United Church, 7258 Vedder Rd, Chilliwack, BC V2R4E4 or etransfer
carmanuc@telus.net

or Chilliwack Outdoors Club (no tax receipt), c/o #11-5960 Cowichan St.,
Chilliwack, BC V2R0L6 or etransfer membershipsecretarycoc@gmail.com

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

Messages of Condolence

Marilyn Cram, you beautiful human being, I am so sad that you have left us early. You were always so positive, so respectful, so interested in life and people. I am burning the large candle you gave me 25 years ago. It is filled with pine cones and fir needles and represents the nature lady you were. I kept it for a special time. Now it will glow with memories of you. I will always honour the days of our friendship. God bless you. Faith

— **Faith Ivall**

I had the privilege of getting to know Marilyn in a Women's Spirituality Group called Sacred Circle. She was such a bright light in our group! I had never met anyone who had slept on a glacier before! Marilyn was deeply spiritual and lived as she spoke. The world has lost a gentle soul!

— **Judy Lester**

A beautiful and complete journey through Marilyn's life. You have done an excellent job and she would have been so proud but still humbled by the immensity of what she had accomplished. She collected friends; and we were honoured to share our adventures with her. My sincere condolences to her three siblings and your extended families.

— **Ellen Woodd**

So sad to hear of the passing of an incredibly kind, funny, intelligent lady who taught me much about caring for children with special needs. Marilyn would visit me and my students at schools where I was an education assistant and she would brighten up my day with her smile, her antics and caring ways. She always showed the deepest respect for others and challenged school staff to bring out the best in our students. Marilyn will always hold a special part of my heart.

— **Babs Snelgrove**

Dear Heather, Marcia, Don and Karl,

What a lovely obituary - your words have captured the essence of Marilyn so well. I have such fond memories of Marilyn, who I first met through the Chilliwack Outdoors Club after moving there from Edinburgh with my husband Trevor in 1983 to work at the Agassiz Research Station. Trevor and I made many wonderful hiking and backpacking trips together with Marilyn. She was a great companion on these trips - with her strength, endurance, outdoor knowledge and spirit of adventure, we were always assured of reaching our destination, returning safely and having a fabulous time along the way. We also enjoyed dinners and potlucks at each other's homes and visiting at the "cabin" in Glacier, as well as many Outdoors Club social occasions. We delighted in the cards that she used to send, usually comprising a photo featuring snow, her tent and her big smile - her cards adorned our fridge, providing daily inspiration for future outings. Marilyn was a great comfort to me following Trevor's untimely death in 1993. I moved to Pullman, Washington in 1996, and she also visited me there. In 2013, I married Tony and moved to Norway. The last time we met was that fall on Saltspring Island, where Nora hosted a big get-together. I certainly did not predict that Marilyn's ski tracks would fade into Alzheimer's. I greatly appreciate being included in the emails describing Marilyn's latter years.

With condolences, and to use Marilyn's favorite closing salutation, love and laughter,

Ruth

— **Ruth Newberry**

miss you forever

— **Doug**

We are so sorry to hear about Maryilyn,you are in our thoughts and prayers.
She was such a beautiful soul and had a full live and yes I will never forget that
huge smile

— **Rennae woof**

I am so sorry for your family's loss. I knew Marilyn for many years as she was
therapist to both of my children while they attended school her in Chilliwack. She
was always so happy to see them when she came to the school and made therapy
fun. Marilyn cared very much for each of her "students" so much so that she
attended my son's memorial when he passed away in 2005. I remember how often
she talked about her newest adventure that she had just finished or was planning. I
have thought of her often over the years. Marilyn was a lovely lady and a bright
light to us all. My condolences to all of you.

— **Beth Sorensen**

I met Marilyn when we were teenagers. She was a kind & thoughtful person.
Sincere condolences to the family on your loss.

Ted

— **Ted Wilford**

In each others presence I was always Marilyn B. and she was Marilyn C. and it will
always remain thus in my mind. I remember Marilyn C. cycling in all weathers to
my Vedder Physiotherapy Clinic where she joined our team of enthusiastic
Physiotherapists. I listened to her stories of her amazing adventures with awe and
admiration. I remember her fun clothing exchanges at her home where I would
meet many friends of the Chilliwack Outdoor Club that I had hiked with over the
more than 20 years of living in Chilliwack. It is truly wonderful to read that she
inspired so many, including myself. Rest in Peace dear Marilyn C.

— **Marilyn Boston**

Be at peace now my dear friend. May there be mountains and powder snow, and water and soft breezes to carry you into your future world.

— **Nora Layard**

Marilyn was Marianne's therapists in the 1980s and she would come to our home and visit her in September. I told her how the teachers needed support in the schools. so from Oct to May she would go to the school. In June she would visit us again. we would put ditto marks all down the months she would visit the school.

That is how we got Marilyn to work in school district 33.

WE did what we had to do.

She had a wonderful knowledge of children and taught Marianne how to swim. She also volunteered for the Horseback Abilities Riding. What a kind person she was.

I admired her athletic abilities. RIP dear Marilyn Cram

— **Marianne and Annette Pope**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/cram-marilyn-louise>

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