Mary Ellen Devine

JUNE 19, 2021

Mrs. Mary Ellen Devine, age 89 years, passed away peacefully on Saturday, June 19, 2021 at the Didsbury Hospital, with her three daughters by her bedside. Mary was born in Regina, Saskatchewan on August 22, 1931. She was adopted into the family of George and Agnes Kneesch, of Climax, Saskatchewan, where she grew up on the farm with her parents and older brothers Charles and Herman, and attended a one-room schoolhouse in the border community of Treelon, Saskatchewan during the years of the Depression and World War II.

Mary received nursing training in Manitoba, and worked for a time at the tuberculosis sanatorium in Brandon, Manitoba, and later moved back to Saskatchewan to work at the Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium, aka "Fort San".

It was in 1950, during her time at Fort San, that Mary briefly met Lloyd Devine, her future husband, at Lake Katepwa. However, by the early 1950s, Mary decided to switch careers, and moved to Alberta. By 1952, Mary was working in central Alberta as a typesetter for the Didsbury Pioneer when she was reunited with Lloyd Devine from Lemberg, SK, who had also migrated to Alberta. They married in 1953, and lived in Didsbury with their three daughters until 1964, when they moved to northern Alberta to farm near Falher.

Later they moved to Peace River, Alberta where Lloyd worked for the Town of Peace River, and Mary worked at the hospital. Later, Mary founded and operated

Mary’s Answering Service, a very successful business that received and answered telephone calls for clients in the days before cellphones and computers. Mary sold her business in 1973, and then worked for the hospital and at Agriculture Canada. Their daughters meanwhile, left Peace River to attend university. Mary Lou and Lori became elementary school teachers in Calgary and Edmonton respectively. Heather briefly taught secondary school in Berwyn, AB, but later returned to university and eventually retired from the Department of History at the University of Calgary.

Mary and Lloyd retired in 1986 to Summerland, B.C., where they lived until 1994. They enjoyed the warmer winters, new friends, golfing and tending to a small orchard. They spent their final years in Didsbury, Alberta to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. Mary was predeceased by her parents and brothers, as well as her husband Lloyd (2009).

Mary was a kind woman who cared about others in her community and the world. She was a member of the United Church and an active volunteer. Mary kept in touch with her friends as well as she could, though she was blind for the last few years due to macular degeneration. She never forgot a birthday and was so proud of her grandchildren. For such a small woman she displayed emotional and physical strength- taking the bus to appointments and downtown until the Covid situation put limitations on her activities.

She is lovingly remembered by her three daughters, Mary Louella Gillatt (John) and sons Daniel and Jackson; Heather Devine (Andy Mullan) and their daughter Lindsay; and Lori Lynne Burke (Lorne) and sons John and Aidan. Mary is also lovingly remembered by numerous nieces and nephews from the Kneesch family, as well as several relatives from her birth families (Nofield and Swanstrom).

A Private Celebration of Life will be held for family due to COVID 19 Restrictions. A Public Celebration of Life will be held in the Summer of 2022. If friends so

desire, memorial tributes may be made to the CNIB: cnib.donorportal.ca or the Didsbury Public Library, 2033 19 Ave, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0.

Messages of Condolence

I had the pleasure of meeting Mary at Aspen Ridge Lodge. When working on the front desk I would always smile to see Mary's sweet face resting on the counter. She loved her scrabble and I am grateful to have played with her. I considered Mary one of my good friends at the lodge. She is certainly missed.

— Connie I Irwin

I came across your mom's obituary in the Calgary Herald...what a flashback to the past and childhood memories.
Sorry to hear of the loss of your mom. I'm not sure if you remember me, I was your neighbor across the street for a number of years. Lori you and I were friends. I remember your mom as a gentle soul, answering the Peace River switchboard, while raising the three of you with your dad.
May you enjoy the memories of your mom...and treasure them in your heart always! blessings on you all!

— Linda (Nadeau) Rochow

I was privileged to meet Mary while visiting my father at Aspen Ridge Lodge. We became fast friends and I grew to love her in a short while. Please accept my sincere condolences.

— Wendy Steckly

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/devine-mary-ellen

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