Barbara Karen Furst



MARCH 5, 2023

“the most wasted of all days is one without laughter” ~ e.e. cummings

Barbara Karen Furst (75) — a graceful and witty soul — passed away on March 5, 2023 with her steadfast and loving husband, Dag Furst, by her side. After a long journey with Alzheimer’s Disease, she leaves behind many adoring relations and friends, including her children Jennifer & Thomas; sister, Sharon Durie; daughter-in-law, Sarah-Jane Lusina; and grandchildren, Ryder & Stella.

Barbara was born on May 5, 1947 to Stella & Ronald MacDougall (deceased). She grew up in the rural beauty of Manitoulin Island and memories of this place brought her great comfort in her final years, especially that of her parent’s general store and swimming in the lake at their summer cottage.

Barbara was truly an inspiration for her younger sister, Sharon, and was able to teach her many life skills and pass on her knowledge of many important things. Things like a wet dish cloth stings more on the legs than a dry tea towel (guess who was washing the dishes!) And that being the person who hides in ‘Hide & Seek’ is not all that fun if no one is looking for you. And learning to drive a stick shift can be hard on the neck but sure can cause gales of laughter. Laughter was such a big part of what they shared together.

Barbara ventured to Sudbury for high school, where she strengthened her independent, capable nature. She earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree at the University of Toronto along with cherished friendships. In Toronto she met Dag, her beloved husband of 54 years. In the early 70's Barbara and Dag lived in Norway where Barbara demonstrated her incredible talent for languages, effectively applying her clever humour in Norwegian. She also mastered her mother-in-law's recipe for traditional rosinboller (raisin buns), which were endearingly renamed 'grandma buns' as they became a snack time staple for Ryder & Stella.

When back in Canada, Barbara and Dag made a happy life in Rossland where Jennifer was born. Barbara was heavily involved with an accomplished theatre group and had major roles in "The Mouse Trap" and "Blythe Spirit". The Fursts welcomed Thomas to the family soon after they relocated to West Vancouver. Barbara became close friends with other mums in the neighbourhood, sharing child care and enjoying many play dates at the warm West Vancouver beaches. Even after the kids were grown, Barbara and her friends would gather to celebrate their birthdays, eat great food, exchange silly gifts–coining themselves "the Birthday Bunch".

As little tots, Jennifer and Thomas, were quite content to be pulled in the "pulk" (ski toboggan) while mum and dad traverse the Nordic trails. On the school grounds, Barbara's famous baking was great trading material for junk food she'd never buy. Barbara was a practical, deeply caring mother. She set high but achievable expectations of her children and supported them unwaveringly in finding their own paths. She always added extra fun and laughter to family traditions, like hiding your birthday presents and making you play "Hot & Cold" to find them.

Barbara warmly welcomed Sarah to the family and happy memories were made picking wedding dresses and preparing for grandbabies. Barbara shared a very special bond with her grandchildren. She taught them precious and powerful lessons in love, compassion, and connection.

After Barbara’s career in education, she and Dag retired to the Sunshine Coast where Barbara’s bliss was to swim and kayak in the sparkling ocean. She was an avid reader, savvy crossword player, talented writer and quilter, and loved playing word games with friends. Dag and Barbara enjoyed traveling with many trips to Norway, Peru, Hawaii, and Mexico. On the trip of her lifetime to the Galápagos Islands, Barbara was fittingly proclaimed the queen of their boat. Indeed, Barbara was an elegant queen, even if she only owned a dollar store tiara (how many photos do we all have of her posing with a plastic rhinestone headpiece in jest?!).

The family is forever grateful for the compassionate and skilled care of an in-home support worker, the VCH older adult mental health care team, the Hope Centre, and especially The Village Langley care home staff.

Barbara will be dearly missed, but she will always be kept close in heart and her traditions and love will live on.

A celebration of life will be held on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at 2:00 pm at the West Vancouver Yacht Club. RSVP: https://forms.gle/qwj6vLwzUXrbMgvp7. Family flowers only. Donations can be made to the Alzheimer’s Society of British Columbia.

Messages of Condolence

What a beautiful tribute to a well loved and admired woman! Thank you! I have only had a couple of occasions of meeting Barbara and each time she was so welcoming and curious about what I was doing. The few conversations I had with her I was able to see her grace, compassion and deep love she had for her family. You could see the joy in her eyes and her smile as she talked about them.

— Karen Yacyshyn

Thanks for the fun times we had With you both.
From whales and grizzlies to delicious crab and baguette on the deck
With love
Leslie and Ian

— Leslie Kilgour

I never met Barbara, but it sounds like she was quite the gal. You will miss her, Dag, but it seems that you have many happy memories to fall back on.

— Ted Bancroft

Dear Dag. Your cousins join you in mourning the loss of Barb. All of us all had the pleasure of meeting her when you lived in Norway, and we have very fond memories of Barb. Your cousins will support the Alzheimer's Society of British Columbia with a donation, which will be transferred today. Best regards from your cousins.

— Kalle Fürst

My condolences to the families. Barbara was not a frequent visitor to Manitowaning during my time there but each visit was an occasion with the family who were my next door neighbours. The whole family were and are very dear to my heart.

— Jim. Gee

What a lovely tribute and a beautiful life well-lived. My condolences to the family. I never knew Barbara but I think I would really have liked her! I did know her parents and they were lovely humans and it seems their loveliness was carried on through Barbara. God bless you all.

— Janyn Towns (Gordon)

Kjære Dag, Jennifer og Thomas.
Kondolerer.
Vi tenker på dere. Så trist at Barb ble syk og derfor mistet mye. Men så godt å ha mange, mange gode minner. Det var så fint å ha deg Dag her i Norge; vi snakket mye om flotte Barb!!!
Vi lærte å kjenne henne som en fantastisk kvinne!
Gode hilsener fra Nette og Bjørn

— Mette Ravlo

Jan and I were so sorry to hear about Barbara's passing. Your tribute to her was wonderful, and we will be thinking of you and your family in the days ahead. It's hard to believe that your journey with Barbara started back in the good old days of Devonshire House at the U of T. All the best.

— Lee Stinson

Barbara was a wonderful sister-in-law; hospitable, kind and generous. I am grateful for the many happy memories I have of my visits with Dag and Barbara. She always made me feel welcome. She will be sorely missed.

— Per Furst

We now think back on and cherish dearly the times we spent with Barbara.
We aged together and she left us much too soon. A great lady !

— Wanda and Jim Dube

I did not know her well, however, as a summer neighbor on Tillicum, I do remember her smile and grace. Hugs to you Dag, and your family.

— Jill Bert

My heartfelt sympathy goes out to you Dag, Jennifer, Thomas and Sarah, also to the wonderful group of Barbara’s friends whom I had the pleasure to meet. It was truly a blessing to know Barbara and to be part of her care team. Although it was during a tough time for her to challenge her memory, she still left me with laughter and stories to cherish.

Rest In Peace Dear Barbara

— Homa

A beautiful queen indeed. I'm so sorry for your loss Dag.

— Dave Galloway

Sheila and Allen Hern send their sympathy and love to Dag and your family in the loss of your wife and mother.

— Sheila and Allen Hern

Dear Barbara and I worked closely together on a team teaching ESL at Sentinel Secondary in the 90's. I don't know what I would have done without Barbara. Besides being a very precious friend she was strong, reliable, clever and talented. Our work was challenging and she was always there with support, understanding and intelligence. Even on the hardest of days Barbara made it possible to laugh. I have kept some of her writings and will always miss her. I am so sorry for your loss Dag and family and friends.

— Jean Ellis

Barb’s beautifully composed In Memorium is a lasting tribute to the wonderful person she was as all the comments attest. I and my closest family have shared many endearing experiences and moments with Barb and Dag and their family over many years often also together with others who have commented. We share many fond memories of times together with Barb where laughter was indeed always present. We are heart-broken that such a dear friend has departed the present. But we cherish that we were fortunate to have had her as our dearest friend.
With deep condolences to Dag and their family.

— Bill Martin

In my mind, I have been scrolling though so many great memories of Barbara, in so many places, doing so many things over the 40 + years I and our family have had the fun and the benefit of knowing Barbara. From when our kids were so little, to now when even our grandkids are not so little. Starting with the Group of Seven in Eagle Harbour, then also Whistler, Mixal Lake, Tillicum Bay, North Vancouver, and one of our family at Manitoulin Island - the home of the "Freshwater Newfies"- of which Barbara was a classic example! Barbara brought a 'special light' - I cannot think of how else to describe her presence - and her beautiful smile to everywhere and to everyone. She is greatly missed.

— Doug Hayhurst

Barbara's obituary is a wonderful tribute to her. We have many memories of her as we grew up together on Manitoulin Island and the many times in later years we gathered for events. Our thoughts are with you, Dag, and your family, as well as Barbara's sister, Sharon, and her family .
Love, Elaine and Will

— Elaine and Will Samis

Dearest Dag, it is with a heavy heart that we send our sincerest condolences at the passing of your beautiful wife Barbara. We will always remember her kindness and warm welcome when we visited your home in North Vancouver and Sechelt.

In particular we will always be grateful to Barbara and you for caring and loving our daughter Sarah-Jane. Supporting her when she was far from home. Barbara helping her select her wedding dress and being there to help both her and Tom when Ryder and Stella-Jane were born.

Our deepest sympathy to you and your family as we share in your great loss.

— Jessie and Frank Lusina

Alternatives
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES

https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/furst-barbara-karen

Printed on November 3, 2026