Genelle May Giesbrecht

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020



Genelle and her two brothers Keith and Kent were raised by her loving parents Ken and Pat Burak in Thompson, Manitoba. Genelle's mom and dad did everything for their kids, keeping them busy with many activities. Genelle loved many years of figure skating, dancing, swimming lessons, baton classes, was in a bowling league, played baseball and was in Brownies and Girl Guides. She also spent a lot of time at the hockey rink watching her brothers play, and her dad coach.

Genelle's favorite time of year was the family trips to her grandparents' farms where she enjoyed playing with her brothers and many cousins for what felt like the whole summer. She also really loved going to matinee movies with her mom and older brother. As a young teenager, Genelle took a big interest in cooking and baking. She remembers making a huge mess in her moms very neat and tidy kitchen, but her mom always cleaned up after her with a smile on her face.

Her first couple of jobs were working in delis, and she eventually decided she wanted to open her own deli. Genelle asked her dad for help, and together they started "The Corner Deli", which was a popular lunch spot for locals. As with everything she did, Genelle put so much passion into the deli and had a couple of great years with her dad, which she spoke fondly of. The deli was sold many years later by the family, but still exists today in Thompson.

Soon after high school, Genelle met a pilot named John who was stationed in Thompson. He was from BC, which was a bonus - as the winters were just a bit milder! Shortly after, they moved to BC and married. Genelle's new passion would be to become the best wife and mother. She always wanted a family; her 2 kids, Michelle and Jeff, and her husband John made her so happy. Her family got to enjoy her amazing cooking and baking daily and she even perfected cooking all the Mennonite food John was used to eating. John and Genelle would regularly host parties and family gatherings where there was always an extra seat at the table and everyone felt welcome.

Watching her kids grow up and teaching them values, spirituality, strength and hard work ethic was important to her. Genelle spent many years at home raising them and being the best mom to her kids. The family was very close and enjoyed family camping trips and vacations to Disneyland, Mexico, Las Vegas and countless other adventures. The memories made will be cherished for a lifetime.

John and Genelle started the airline Airspeed Aviation in 1986. In the early years, John handled the business, piloting flights and taking care of administrative work while Genelle raised young kids at home. As the kids grew older, Genelle decided to join John at the airport, where she thrived in the field and forged many relationships, helping Airspeed soar to new heights. She really enjoyed her time with their passengers and the airport staff.

When the kids got older and could drive, John and Genelle purchased a vacation home in Hope, near Kawkawa Lake. They loved how it was only an hour away and could really be enjoyed by all of their friends and family. Michelle and Jeff's friends were always welcome; and they would spend hours out boating on the lake. After a day on the water, Genelle would spoil everyone with a delicious array of snacks, followed by an amazing dinner. John and Genelle would spend the weekends there with the kids and their friends and became more than "parents" -

they were their friends too. She genuinely loved opening her home to all.

Michelle and Jeff both married, and their spouses were both immediately part of the family - she treated them like her own children. A few years later, Genelle couldn’t have been more excited to be blessed with four grandchildren, who became her world. She truly was the most amazing and proud grandma.

After over 20 years serving the Fraser Valley with Airspeed, the time seemed right to sell their airline. As relatively young empty nesters, they felt it was time for a new endeavour and they moved onto a chicken farm on an acreage. The farm had an old farmhouse on it which Genelle fell in love with, as it reminded her of her grandparents’ house on the farm. Her talent for gardening and decorating, along with her TLC made the house and property a cozy, welcoming home which she knew the whole family would enjoy for years to come. John and Genelle really loved their new life on the farm.

Genelle felt like she had more to give; and took on a part time position at a nursing home called the Menno Home. She quickly realized how much she loved working there and her part time position turned into full time. With her kind-hearted nature, she gained many more friends there. Shortly after she took her full-time position, she was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

Genelle made the most out of her remaining 2.5 years, by fearlessly fighting her illness. She was incredibly strong and would not let her health hold her back from enjoying time with her family. Despite countless treatments of chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, she continued to be strong.

On September 7, 2020, she passed away peacefully at home with her family surrounding her. She had recently turned 57 years old.

Genelle was predeceased by her father Ken, survived by her mother Pat, brothers Keith (Suzanne) & Kent (Lorraine), husband John, children Michelle (Morgan) &

Jeff (Jolene) and four beloved grandchildren.

The family would like to thank the staff at BC Cancer Abbotsford, the palliative home health nurses as well as the pharmacy team at the Highstreet Walmart for providing excellent care for Genelle.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the family is planning a private celebration of Genelle’s life in the future.

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

Messages of Condolence

Our sincere condolences to the family. We met Genelle and the Burak family while living in Thompson back in 1974. Many happy times and treasured memories. Gone too soon.

— Randy and Maureen Demyd

Genelle was beautiful inside and out! She cherished her family and was a true fighter. She will be truly missed. To Michelle, Jeff, John and families, my deepest condolences to you!
Love, Marina, Mathieu, Alexandre □ □ □

— Marina Frenette

We are so incredibly sorry for your loss. Genelle was an amazing woman and will be missed by everyone who knew her. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

— Willy and Angie Ediger

What an amazing tribute to an obviously amazing woman. Although much too short , what an exciting life it was! Our deepest condolences to all of you in this difficult time. May God wrap his comforting arms around you all and may you feel His love and the love of many others

— John and Wendy Glazema

RIP to a truly amazing individual- heartfelt condolences to Michelle and her entire family

— Jennifer McLaren

My deepest condolences Geisbrecht family. Genelle was an amazing lady. Her kind and open heart always made me feel like I was part of the family. Because of this my memories from growing up with you all meant that much more. I will forever cherish the times I got to spend with her and all of you!
My heart and thoughts go out to you all.

— Kyle Wynia

Sincere Condolences from Gaby and family
I got to know Genelle thru Michelle. She was a remarkable woman, beautiful inside and out. I admired her for her style, she loved animal prints and looked like a model. As the years went on I could see and feel the love she had for her grand children.
The world lost a wonderful human being, but the heaven gained an amazing angel.
Rip Genelle.
For the ones she left behind, may prayers , faith and memories guide you thru this very sad and difficult time.
With love to all of you...Gaby

— Gaby Ortner

We had the pleasure of meeting Genelle when John first brought her to B.C. We married the same year, raised our families together and have so many fond memories. We will always remember her kindness and generosity. She was an amazing host and had this natural touch to make her surroundings look beautiful and welcoming. Our hearts ache for your loss, she loved qher family so much. You are always in our thoughts and prayers.

— Anita and Hugo Warkentin

I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Genelle was such a kind, loving and generous person. I can only imagine how hard this is for your family. She was so dedicated to you and proud of you. My thoughts are with you. I will always remember how wonderful she was to Reilly and Tasha. We were blessed to have known her. Take care.

— Lorrie Lamb

My condolences Keith and Kent. Your sister was very passionate about life. Taken too soon.

— Colin Rivers

Oh wow so so sorry to hear - what a amazing mom I saw in Genelle in the early years as neighbours on Creekside . I was amazed how much time and energy she put into Michelle and Jeff and how much she loved her family .Their home was always a safe and fun place for our kids - you have been so loved - Family , I wish every memory will continue to hold your heart as you grieve and love each other . What a fantastic family you all are - hugs and tears from the Suderman family .May God hold your tears and comfort you all .

— Debbie suderman

Sincere condolences on your loss. May Genelle’s memory always be a blessing.

— Harold Smith

Hi, knowing John for about 46 years and Genelle about 40 years, we’ve had a lot of great times together. I remember a lot of great camping trips together with they’re kids and my son. I can honestly say that for the most part Genelle always had a smile on her face even in the later part she would try hard to do so. Will miss her. Our condolences to John, Michelle, Jeff and all you’re family and friends.
 You all, Karl & Sandie.

— Karl & Sandie Neufeld

Our sincere condolences to John and all your Family, may the Lord walk beside you and keep you in his Care.

— Peter & lina Giesbrecht

John, Jeff, Michelle and families. Wishing you all peace through this tough time. Genelle was like a second mom to me growing up! Many memories. Thinking about you all lots!

With love, Kyle and Tammy Toews.

— Kyle Toews

This is a woman who will be missed by all that has spent time with her. Genelle was my best friend for years. We enjoyed so many good times and I have wonderful memories on our own, with families and with our friends. I always admired her thoughtfulness with everyone and her good natured ways. She will be fondly remembered by many. My heart goes out to Genelle's family... You all have my deepest sympathy. May she rest in peace and be with God.

— Rosemary Toews

I am a friend of Genelles older brother Keith. I knew Genelle when she lived in Thompson and never got to see the incredible woman that she became after she moved away. But knowing her parents and the amazing job they did with raising their family in Thompson, it is no surprise to hear that she reached such great heights. The world is one angel shorter now but heaven just became a better place. My sincere condolences.

— robert monuik

Hans and I send our sincere condolences to you John, and your children Michele and Jeff & their families. We are so sorry for your loss. Genelle was a beautiful soul with so much to give, she will be missed.

— Hans & Ingrid Krueger

So so sorry for your loss. She was a blessing to all of you.

— Sandy Dumas&John Lute

Genelle was a kind, caring, lovely lady. She was an amazing wife, mother, Grandma and friend.
Condolences to John , Michelle and Morgan, Jeff and Jolene ,her four beautiful grand kids, and her family in Manitoba.

— Hilda Winkelhorst

We are absolutely and sincerely sorry for the profound loss of your wife, mother and grandmother. Genelle was a special and kind-hearted woman; a rare gem and we hold fold memories of her. We are praying for you John and family as you lay your beloved Genelle to rest. May God fill you with His Love and Peace.

— Ferdinand and Rita Siebert

Genelle was such a gracious and loving person. So kind and welcoming. She had the most wonderful ability to make you feel like she was sending a little touch of ‘home’ to you with all her sweet gestures. Whether it was her homemade baked treats for our kids or canned goods for us, she was always so incredibly thoughtful and great at making all the things that she did. Hilda once told me, she never received a dish back from Genelle that wasn’t refilled with some sort of goodie she made. It was such a pleasure to know her and to see the love she had for her family in all the great memories they have created. She will be greatly missed and loved and thought of, forever. Love to the family.

— Brian and Brenda Winkelhorst

Genelle was the kindest, sweetest, most caring person you could ever meet. Her beauty was obvious on the outside as well as on the inside. She would always think of the most perfected thing to do for me, or a perfect gift to buy me. Always so thoughtful. I loved her so very much and was privileged to call her my friend. I will mis her so very much. A friendship like ours does not come along that often. There are just not the right words to say, but I loved her, and know that she loved me too, and one day, we will see each other in heaven, and can introduce our dads to each other.

— Sharon Federau

Heaven has gained another angel

— Daphne Bennett

Love her story! Filled with family, friends, and so many endeavours. Our thoughts are with you all John, Michelle, Jeff and your families as you grieve the loss of your wife, mom and grandma. A beautiful life indeed!

— Mark and irene

From the moment I met Genelle, I liked her! Not only was she sweet, but she was my friend Nettys' sister-in-law. Seeing her at work, she always had a smile on her face and years ago, on Grandparents Day at Menno, she was bbq'ing the hotdogs for the kids. Now I know all about her Deli and cooking love and why she worked in the kitchen. My sincere condolences to you on the loss of a special lady I was privileged to know.

— Mary Jane Vallee

I am truly sorry for your loss. My thoughts are with you.

— Chantelle Michel

So sorry to hear of your loss, keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.

— Rob and Christina McLeod

When words are seldom enough, this is a touching and wonderful tribute to a remarkable woman. She has so warmly set a lifetime of examples for many to follow, she will be sadly missed.
With sincerest of heartfelt sympathies.

— Scott and Leah Beattie

Such a beautiful person inside and out. Genelle fought so hard and is one of the strongest ppl I know! I have so many good memories at the Giesbrecht house; Genelle was always so happy to welcome people into her home and always thought of others before herself. She is loved by many and will be dearly missed. All my love to the family.

— Tracy V

This is Wendy, Jolene s aunt as oma doesn’t have Facebook but she wanted To read the beautiful tribute to Genelle. We really enjoyed reading it together. God bless you in this difficult time.

— Ann Pastoor

I enjoyed many fun times at the Giesbrecht house growing up. Genelle always created a cozy home, lots of yummy snacks, ready to dig into a soap opera with us girls, ready to teach Michelle and I make-up tips, etc. I can hear Genelle’s easy laugh still, which filled their home always. Many hearts were touched with Genelle’s kindness and we will be praying for peace and strength as you learn to navigate this time on earth here without her. All my love

— Stefanie westerberg

So very sorry for the loss of such a amazing woman. Genelle had a wonderful ability to make everyone feel welcome and like a part of the family. We have so many fond memories, whether it was at Kawkawa Lake or just a weekend at the Giesbrecht’s. John and Genelle always welcomed us with open arms. Genelle will be deeply missed, and it was such a privilege to know her.

— Kelly & Justin Walberg

Genelle was always the cool mom-a friend that we could laugh and joke around with. She was such a giving person and put her family's happiness above all else. Watching Genelle with Michelle and Jeff showed me many amazing traits that I hope to have as a mom. She will be missed dearly but I will always be reminded of her with every glimps of leopard print I see. Love to Michelle, John, Jeff and the family

— Karen & Dave Lehal

Genelle was a friend in Kindergarten before she moved to the west end in Thompson. We reconnected in grade 7, became great friends again. Genelle, Daphne and I spent many years growing up in Thompson. Genelle had a little blue truck with a broken transmission, (we drove backwards for months). I was in Genelle's wedding party and she in mine. She was a quiet lady, who kept her thoughts private until she could trust you. Genelle you are and will continue to be missed. My prayer's go out to your family as they grieve and celebrate your life. Carla (AKA Cala Nag) Genelle's nik name for me.

— Carla Buchan (Dnistransky)

We met Genelle and her family a few years before Genelle met John, in Thompson Mb. We lived across the street from her wonderful parents who later became like grand parents to our children. Genelle would come and play with our young children, dressing up our infant boy in her doll dresses. She loved children, family and friends even as a young girl. When she moved to B.C. we only had the pleasure of seeing her one more time at her younger brothers wedding. She was a wonderful person, truly missed by her family and friends. She is now back in her daddy’s arms. □ □ □ Rest In Peace and pain free Genelle. Condolences to the family.

— Janet and Bob Velemirovich

My sincerest condolences to Pat and Keith and Kent for your terrible loss. Genelle was a great person and always had a smile.
My heart goes out to all that loved her! Sounds like she led an incredibly happy, productive, and successful one.

— Trish Roy

My sincere condolences to the Burak and Geisbrecht families.
I went to high school with Genelle in Thompson, Manitoba, and the world has just lost another beautiful soul, too early. May she rest in peace.

— Marlon Sayer

We are so sorry for your loss. Our condolences to John and his family.

— Chris and Sheila

I spent two wonderful years working for John and Genelle at Airspeed. As an employee they taught me the value of hard work and dedication. As a friend, they showed me incredible kindness and generosity.

Genelle treated everyone like one of her own and could never hide the joy she took in being around the ones she loved. I will always cherish our friendship and will hold her memory dearly.

Our deepest sympathy to John, Michelle, Jeff and family

With love from,
Jamie, Sara, Cameron and Malcolm

— Jamie Rimmer

So sad to hear this, our sincere condolences to John and the kids as well as both the families.

— Chris and Christel(Federau) McConochie

I am honored to have had you as my friend Genelle, You were truly special.
Gone too soon but never forgotten.
Love you lots girl.

— Laura Fast

Our sincere condolences to the family.
No one can bring to an end the Spirit which is Everlasting.

— Christine and Merv Bowman

Genelle was always a warm and caring aunt to me. We didn’t see each other often, but she always made a point of sparking an easy and genuine conversation with me at every family gathering. Her interest in my life was always felt and appreciated. One particularly fond memory was after the birth of my second child. Her daughter and my cousin, Michelle, mentioned to me that her mom really wanted to meet Oliver and that we could meet up a coffee shop. Genelle was so thoughtful to suggest the coffee date and she was so excited to hold Oliver and spend time with him. It was a simple gesture but one that touched my heart. She will be truly missed.

— Angela Poon

Such a heartbreaking loss. Genelle was always so kind, so genuine, so welcoming. I know that spirit will live on in her kids and grandkids and beyond because her legacy is strong. She always made it a point to try and make me feel like a part of this extended family and I will always be grateful for that.

The beautifully written biography above gives so much insight into an amazing life well lived. She will be missed dearly.

— Ash Poon

Sending my heartfelt condolences to John, Michelle and Jeff, as well as to her mother, Pat and two brothers Keith and Kent. It truly saddens me to have to read this as I always hoped and prayed for Genelle's recovery. Some of my best memories are going for breakfast at Southwood before school in her dad's big car, going fishing in the boat that Kent so proudly built, having identical graduation dresses sewn by her mom (hers was mauve and mine was blue) and hanging out at her house baking new treats for Keith and his friends to try. I remember the night she met her soulmate and her forever partner in life John, it was truly love at first sight for her. Please know that my thoughts are with you during this difficult time and always treasure your many happy and wonderful memories.

— Kim Michaluk

John Michelle Jeff

There are no words I can say to make you feel better
To lose a wife,mother,grandmother
and friend
I hope you can find peace in the memories you hold dear to your heart
Genelle was always so bubbly
She was a beautiful Lady fun to be around always so cheerful
My thoughts are with you
John. Michelle Jeff.
And all other family members
Genelle will be missed
□ □ □

— Deborah Steve. Ready

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