

Valerie Selene Gower

DECEMBER 15, 2020



Valerie Selene Gower, born August 14, 1950, as known by her sisters: Lynn Caldwell and Lorna Gower.

Although Val had a tough last few years with illness, and the passing of her husband, Ronald Virtue (Hallie), she had a full life with many friends and family of whom she looked out for.

We're going to take you back in time, through her later years amongst her newest friends, back past her golden years with Ron, back past her middle years, working years, younger days, all the way back through her formative years and childhood - through the life of our dearly departed sister.

During her latest years, Val had lived in the deep south of Calgary, and gained a few southern friends who would go on walks, play bingo, and have BBQ's and enjoy each other's companionship. Within the last year, Val was able to live in an apartment complex with some of her oldest friends, and where she was able to be part of the Crew. They enjoyed going for dinner at the local church, playing Yahtzee and cards in the Bistro, and just sharing great conversation. Both Lynn and Lorna would like to say a Thank You! to everyone at Sundance on the Green - you made our sister feel instantly welcome and very much at home during her time there.

Val and Ron were together for many years before taking the plunge to get married. Even though they loved each other a lot, Val was spooked about tying the legal knot and getting married. She was worried that making their relationship official

would jinx their happiness together, which we all know definitely did not happen. They dearly loved each other and were best friends to the end. Her married years with Ron were the happiest for Val. There were many Sunday dinners with entertaining stories, comfortable evenings watching movies and football, and much reminiscing over past experiences and adventures. Val and Ron enjoyed horse racing, and with both family and friends there would be many weekends spent at the track, and much kibitzing, touting, and betting between all. They both enjoyed travelling the United States by themselves, with family, and with friends.

Valerie had gained a second family with Ron's family: The McEacherns: Laurie and Dave, their boys: James, Jeff, and Dave, their spouses, and grandchildren. She spent many Christmas holidays with them and cherished the time she was able to see the kids all grow up, get married, and have families of their own. She especially loved the picnics we were able to all go on where the boys would fish, and we all spent a beautiful day along the Elbow river catching up.

Val's own family includes her sister Lynn, Lynn's husband Tom, and son Cody and his wife Nancy; our brother Mike, his wife Diane, and children Kyle and Sarah; and sister Lorna and her spouse Mike. Our cousin Maureen has been like a sister to all of us and her husband, Michael, is very genuine and friendly, fitting well into our family. Maureen and Val have kept in touch over the years by phone and also periodic luncheon dates with those of us available to make it at the time. It was a great way to keep up to date in each other's busy lives. We look forward to continuing the phone calls and luncheons with Maureen with the first few luncheons in Val's honour.

Ever the glue, Val was the one who cultivated the "Prairie Connection" with our cousins in Manitoba. Each Christmas she would type up a note on what we've been up to in Calgary, and make sure everyone in Manitoba would receive our good wishes with their Christmas cards. We're very appreciative of that connection and

hope to continue going forward with her tradition.

Val's working years included 25 years with the Calgary Public School Board, starting up her own company, Quality Office Services, and finishing her career with Alberta Health Services. With the schoolboard, she represented the Association for many years honing her skills of serving as a mediator between CBE and its workers. She continued to use this skill on condo boards in two of the complexes she lived in. As younger sisters, we relied quite heavily (and often) on Val's advice on how best to work in an office environment, handle office conflicts, handle general transactions between ourselves and various professional organizations, and how best to "play the political game" when it was needed. Her teaching us the skill of being able to "see through the bull" never hurt either.

Val had numerous girlfriends in her formative years of which she dearly loved. That love still exists today with the fact that they've all been in contact to this day. The Kamis girls: Maggie, Gail, and Linda; her young adult friends: Sheila Kawalik, Lynn Gallow, and Kerry Pace, all of which both Lynn and I have also had the pleasure of knowing through the years. Maggie and Val had a special friendship that lasted a lifetime—Val dearly loved her best friend whom she enjoyed a lot of fond memories with.

Growing up as a child, Val spent a part of her school holiday's one idyllic summer on Uncle Buff's and Aunt Dorothy's farm in Snowflake, MB. She loved spending time around the farm animals and also staying with her favourite Gramma in the town of Snowflake. Later that summer she stayed with Uncle Albert and Aunt Sonya and their large family of boys on their mink farm in Selkirk, MB. As a child (and all through her life) Christmas was Val's favorite time of the year and her enthusiasm was contagious. She loved hosting Christmas dinners with family and friends, making her famous Kolbassa stuffing and Christmas cookies. Her entire house would be lit up with Christmas lights and many decorations. As a kid Val

couldn't wait to run streamers around the living room and decorate the tree (after which, when we were all in bed, Mom would go around straightening ornaments, lights and tinsel, and taking down some of the many, many, many streamers that had been put up). Val also loved singing Christmas carols when we were younger and put together a group of us kids from the block to go house-to-house singing carols to all of our neighbours.

All during her life, Val loved her road trips: driving from visit to visit, logging mileage on that old, green Duster, racing off a green light, and driving some more. It looks like that love of Road-tripping runs through her sisters and her niece, and that her love of travel does as well - maybe there's some of that in all of us. Here's hoping we all enjoy a great Road Trip through life like Val has, with many great memories along the way. Valerie Selene Gower has had a full life; she's gained an extended family and many friends that she's loved tremendously along the way, and so maybe a little of her joy will be with you on your next Road Trip!

Messages of Condolence

Thinking of Valerie's family and friends at this time.

— **Lisa Gower**

As Val's cousin who is close in age, I most remember her from 1966 when she came back from Calgary with our family for a visit to her Manitoba relatives. The last number of years we kept in touch by e-mail and I was saddened to hear of her cancer diagnosis. I really barely knew her but will miss her jokes and family updates. When I was compiling the family tree, she provided me with info for which I am grateful.

Thinking of you Lorna and Lynn at this difficult time. As sisters, I'm sure you have many fond memories of your older sibling. She will not be forgotten.

— **Alayne Pearen**

May she rest in peace knew Val (Buffy) years ago working at the CBE and through Ron which I knew before they were with each other they were such a loving couple heaven has another angel.

— **jane Harrison**

I have known Val (Buffy) for many years and we always kept in touch especially at Christmas. Ron was like an uncle to me right from a little girl and then of course I knew Val when her and Ron got together. In the years past, we kept in touch more often and I actually called her the day she was going into hospice. COVID prevented us from seeing each other but we had a good bond. We never did get that lunch. Heaven truly does have another angel! I am glad she didn't suffer too long. May she rest in peace. ☐ to Lynn and the rest of the family please know it was an honor to know her.

— **Alana Newton (McEwan)**

My condolences to Valerie's family.

Valerie (Buffy) as known to her oldest friends, and I met through Ronnie as we worked together at a pub/restaurant (the Lamplighter at Chinook Centre) back in the early sixties. Ronnie and Leo (my husband) were old buddies at the racetrack. Many weekends were spent at the 'track' in those days and lots of stories to tell. This friendship continued through the years and many memories are left to be cherished until we all meet again.

For the last five years Val has been there for me and I for her as we have lost many friends and cherished family members. I am very grateful to have known 'Buffy' and miss our daily chats. My wish is she is now out of pain at last and probably playing bingo or betting on the horses with Ron and her friends who went before her. Rest easy 'Buffy'.

Till we all meet again,
Irene

— Irene Breland

To All of Val's family, my condolences. Altho I have only known Val for the last 5 years, we met when we moved into Cranston Ridge. We were board members together, Val had experiences doing this and I was learning, but she took me under her wings and was always patient with my many questions. Sometimes she would come up or I would go down be it for a coffee or some wine as we pondered an issue. And she would always bring my hubby a jar of pickled beets! He loved them! So I was honoured when she included me into her circle of friends. I will miss her. Glad your pain is gone, my friend. Rest in peace, Val!

— Donna Murray

Many condolences to Val's family and friends.

I met Val when she moved into Cranston. Val always knew what she wanted and I find comfort knowing she was able to accomplish this thru to end. Living and ending life on her terms. I will miss our meetings and will cherish the memories..

— **Pat Lanuke**

Valerie was my cousin, although I didn't really get to know her we did meet once or twice.

Valerie's Dad and my Mom Bernice Gower were Brother and Sister

Sending condolences to her family and friends

— **Joyce Rinn**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/gower-valerie-selene>

Printed on June 3, 2026