Jo Ann Mackenzie

JULY 21, 2025



Jo Ann (nee Meyer, Murray) Mackenzie was born on May 18, 1933, in Indianapolis Indiana, USA, and passed away July 21, 2025 in Surrey BC, Canada. She is survived by, and greatly missed by, her loving daughters Linda Murray and Carol Murray, and high-school chum Rod Macy.

The early years:

Jo Ann had a life-long interest in “the out-of-doors”, beginning in Indiana under the guidance of her father. Her father told her stories about “Johnny Fox and Billy Beaver,” taught her constellations in the night sky, how to know trees and animal tracks, how to catch fish, and how to shoot a pistol. She thought she was the “son” he never had. Her interest in nature and the sciences continued, but without the fishing and hunting. She began to enjoy “birding” in the early 1960's, and seriously so in 1966, due to an opportunity to closely observe a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in our backyard. That small creature ignited her passion for bird observation and study and she ‘dove in’ with both feet.

Reflections from her daughters:

Jo Ann was a single mom in the 1960’s & 1970’s to daughters Linda and Carol, after a divorce from their father James Murray. At that time we lived in Scarborough Ontario. She went to teachers’ college to support us, and when she

got a job as a teacher, she wisely decided it would be nice for us to have a dog for company. She adopted a border collie we called Fida, whom all 3 of us immediately fell in love with. She used to take us and the dog camping and birdwatching (one Christmas, all the way from Toronto to the Chiricahua Mountains in the southern US). During the long drives, Linda would watch for all the different license plates as we drove and Carol would read Archie comics. She would take us tent camping closer to home as well, and these trips instilled a very deep love for nature within both of us. On one camping trip our dog caught and killed a racoon. Another camper at the campsite was amazed at the ability of our dog to kill the racoon and immediately offered to buy our dog. Mom said, 'absolutely not!'. During our childhood years she taught us orienteering and the three of us would go compete in orienteering events. She also supported our interests in other athletic pursuits including figure skating, cross-country running, and track-and-field meets. She bought us a Betty Crocker cookbook for kids so we could learn how to cook, an essential life-skill that we both are immensely grateful for.

During her teaching years she beat out 30 male teachers for a coveted outdoor education job in Scarborough, and was offered the job. This was her absolute dream job. In 1974 she met Hue Mackenzie on a birdwatching trip in Africa. Both were avid birders and they decided to marry, so the three of us moved to Ottawa. The two of them moved back to Vancouver in the early 1980's.

Mom was a true and fearless adventurer; she went on birdwatching trips in over 50 countries, quite a few by herself after Hue died. One of her favourites was a trip to Bhutan where she fell in love with the people and the culture, and she also loved helping lead birdwatching tours in Taiwan. She took both Linda and Carol on separate trips to Taiwan and later took Linda on a trip to Antarctica and Carol on a

trip to the Galapagos. She was curious, had a good sense of humour, loved to laugh, loved to learn. She lived life on her terms and was unapologetic about it. She blazed trails that not many women took back then. We miss her terribly.

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Printed on November 1, 2026