

Rosemary Helen Leach

JANUARY 4, 2020

Rosemary Helen Leach (nee Page). Born 1931 in Bombay, India to British banker William TA Page and Maude Irene Page (nee Burniston). Died January 4, 2020 after a stoic battle with cancer. She had one sibling, Arnold Christopher Page (Chris). Rosemary spent much of her childhood in India where she enjoyed riding her horse into the mountains of Kashmir to attend school, when she wasn't in England attending boarding school. After leaving school, she traveled the world working as a purser on the Orient Line's passenger ship SS Orcades.



She later worked in London, where she met and married Howard Arthur Leach in 1961; together they had two daughters, Sarah (Richard) and Tracy. The family moved to Vancouver, Canada in 1968. The marriage ended in 1974, but Rosemary and Howard remained friendly throughout their lives and shared in the raising of their children.

Rosemary was a caring mother who always put her children first. In 1972, she began working at UBC as a secretary for the Department of English, starting as an English 100 secretary and working her way up to Graduate Secretary. She formed lifelong friendships amongst colleagues and faculty, and was particularly adored by the students, many of whom remained in touch until her death. She was unfailingly helpful, a quality appreciated by anxious international students facing panic-inducing bureaucratic glitches. In 1996, she was awarded the UBC

President's Service Award for Excellence. She was also a beloved host mother and dear friend to numerous Homestay students from Japan.

Rosemary was a natural at gardening, and passers-by frequently stopped to admire the results of her labour. She loved to spend time in Van Dusen Botanical Gardens.

She was an avid reader of news and fiction, a daily doer of crossword puzzles, and loved murder mysteries, classical music, wine, good food, cats, dogs, and family.

Things she disliked intensely included British puddings, peanut butter, bureaucratic red tape, automated telephone trees, unnecessary noise, and vocal fry.

Rosemary was always close to her brother, Chris, and in an eerily coincidental turn of fate, she passed away three hours after he did after his own battle with cancer in England. She will be sorely missed by her family and many friends. A service and celebration of life will be held February 22nd,; for details, please email tracyleach1@gmail.com

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the Vancouver Hospice Society, North Shore Search and Rescue, BC Cancer Agency, or a charity of your choice.

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

Messages of Condolence

Very sorry to hear of your loss, Tracy, and sincere condolences to you and Sarah from my family. Although of course I never met your mom, by all of your descriptions she certainly sounded like a very special person and she most certainly lives on in you.

Mick

— **Michael (Mick), Jan, Genevieve, and Conor Bailey**

What a beautiful tribute to your mom. She had such a great life. A life well lived and loved by many

— **Lisa Yeoman**

We extend our condolence to the departed spirit.

This obituary is really beautiful. She was very kind to us. (We are not good at English) When we went to see Rosemary in 2014, she was really fine and had a good health. So we can't believe her death. She is still precious person to us. We are honored to have known her. she will always be in our heart.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy.

— **Hiro, Naoya, Sayaka and Kimiyo**

We are so sorry to hear your loss. Your mother was the most loving, caring lady who helped us in many ways during our stay in Canada and after we came back home country as well. We will never forget her kindness. Our big regret will be we did not get to see her in recent years. Thank you for everything, Rosemary, and may God bless you.

— **Michiaki and Fumi Sugita**

Rosemary was a great woman, and it was my pleasure to have known her.

I will really miss her.

Please accept my heartfelt condolences.

— **Masayo Ohori**

Beautiful, funny and a perfect snapshot of an amazing life, well lived and loved.

Thanks Tracey....love Katherine

— **Katherine Lauriente**

What a lovely tribute to a warm, delightful woman. My condolences to her family.

Rosemary was the calm centre in the midst of the sometimes frenetic activity in the English Department. Her kindness and humour were always appreciated.

— **Carol van Rijn**

As a faculty member in the English Department at UBC, I worked with Rosemary for a number of years before her retirement. She was a joy to know and to work with. I'm very sorry to hear of her passing. I would love to come to the celebration of her life, but unfortunately I'm abroad at the moment.

— **John Xiros Cooper**

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest condolence you and your family. I am so sorry to hear about the loss of mother. From the very beginning I don't have any relationship with your mom I don't even know about her deeply until read this page. I just know your mom from my student who is a Japanese (Kimiyo-san). Your mom or family was used to be her host Family in Canada. As what you mentioned also in this page. I was touched about her story from Kimiyo. How they exchanged Xmas or New Year's Cards for more than a decade. How your mom treat her during her stay in your house. It was amazing. It made me more amazed after I read this page. I feel you coz I had experienced this situation few years ago. I want you to be more positive and be passionate in life. Thank you for allowing me to do this. God bless!

— **Genevie Cuambot**

Rosemary and I spent many happy years working together in the English Department and stayed friends long after we both retired. Those were fun filled and exciting years. I first met Rosemary in 1974, when I started working for Prof. John Hulcoop, Honours Chairman of the English Department. I looked forward coming to work each day. I enjoyed working with Rosemary and the faculty of the English Department. We often laughed about our threat to co-author a book which we would call "The English Department". Unfortunately or fortunately, we never managed to do so...

We not only worked together, but also spent many happy social hours together with our children: Sarah & Tracy, and Bettina & Guy. When Sarah and Bettina, our oldest girls, were 11 years old, we decided to bake gingerbread boys for Christmas... Rosemary & I had already enjoyed several glasses of Gluehwein when it came time to decorate them. To the horror and disgust of all our four children, Rosemary and my boys became increasingly naughtier and obscene looking. We often laughed about those Christmas get-togethers. A week before Rosemary died, I visited her in the palliative care home and brought her a gingerbread boy which I had made for her. She enjoyed eating the "shortbread" boy, while we reminisced about the good, old days.

I will miss my dear friend very much, but I am relieved to know that she does not have to suffer any longer. I look forward to making many more naughty gingerbread boys with Rosemary, talking about those good, old days, and finally writing our book about the UBC English Department in the 1970s and '80s...in a future life.

— **Ingrid Ross**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/leach-rosemary-helen>

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