Mary Raphael



JANUARY 29, 2026

Mary Raphael

(November 27, 1934 to January 29, 2026)

It is with great sadness that Liz and Monique announce the passing of their dear friend Mary.

Fiercely independent, Mary represented a life well lived. Born in Richmond, England, she spent her early adult years there before immigrating to Canada in 1965. She made the journey across the Atlantic on her own, eventually settling in Vancouver, where she built a long and successful career at UBC as secretary to the Registrar. She liked to joke that when she retired, they needed two people to replace her!

Mary’s interests were wide-ranging. She loved to travel, and was a devoted reader with an extensive book collection. As a lifelong learner, she enjoyed taking self-improvement courses. Her creativity found expression in many forms—from her work as a master seamstress to her piano playing and her enthusiasm for Scottish country dancing. Through these passions she formed many lasting friendships, especially with Elspeth, Margaret, Diane, and Dierdre.

When independent living became more challenging, Liz and Monique supported Mary in helping her to move from her beloved Kitsilano apartment to Amica Arbutus and later to South Granville Park Lodge. These transitions brought new energy and companionship into her life, and she embraced the activities and friendships she found in each community.

Mary had a generous spirit and donated to many charities, some for decades. In keeping with her wishes there will be no formal service. Those who wish to honour her memory are kindly invited to donate to a charity of their choice.
Mary is survived by her niece Yasmin, and her nephew Michael, both of whom live in England.

Liz and Monique would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the staff at both Amica Arbutus and South Granville Lodge for the care, kindness, and dignity they gave to Mary while in their care.

Messages of Condolence

Dear Mary - remembering our many years dancing with you at the SCD balls and on the demonstration team.Always happy times together.

— Diane Markham

So saddened to hear of Mary's passing. Our sincere condolences to her family and friends. Mary was a dear friend of our mother Jane since Mary's arrival in Vancouver back in the 60s. They shared a connection through having both been born (both in 1934) and raised in the UK and growing up through wartime. Mary was a soft spoken, kindly, gentle soul who took a keen interest in our family and the activities of Jane's children. We grew up with Mary like an aunt figure to us as she visited the house regularly and joined us at family meals from time to time. We remember hearing about her Scottish Highland dancing, travels and other interests. She loved her little pale blue Volkswagen bug followed by her trusty Tercel as well as her Kits apartment. I always remember it to be filled with books and memorabilia from her travels and her patio garden she lovingly maintained. Our mum Jane enjoyed many beach walks and chats and laughter on the phone and over coffee with Mary over the many years. Theirs was a great friendship and Mary was a big part of our family story and our childhood memories.

— Kuys Family

My sister and I are just learning now ,of dear Mary Raphael's passing, from the Vancouver Sun's obituary page of March 14thMary was one of the "trio" .....three British women/friends all born in 1934 , two of which ended up in living and settling in Vancouver BC.Mary was a good friend of our mother's Jane (nee Huins) Kuys. She was often at our home- enjoying a delicious home cooked meal around the dining room table -conversing with Jane ,discussing finances or world affairs with Oliver and being quietly entertained by the antics and busyness of their four children .....no doubt she was happy to return to her peaceful apartment in Kitsilano by evening's end !Mary was gentle, soft spoken ,meticulous, independent, intelligent and generous with children's gifts -I seem to remember she drove a lovely light blue Volkswagen Beetle/bug in the early days ...As Mary and our mother Jane ,aged ,they lost their mobility and independent living that they both cherished. Phone calls became less frequent ...we shall pass the sad news on to our dear mother who shall remember Mary with fondness....Caroline ,Jane and Joanna Kuys Vancouver BC

— Kuys family

Remembering Mary. My family were/are Scottish country dancers and Mary’s smiling face and friendly ways were always a welcome addition at balls. I was also a UBC student at a time when UBC was a much smaller community. I would sometimes cross paths with Mary around campus or at the registrar, where it was always nice to see a pleasant, smiling, familiar face while engaging with UBC beuracracy. RIP Mary.

— Helen Moore and Moore family

My aunt Mary was an extremely kind, gentle, softly spoken, generous and friendly soul, who loved travel, learning, Burnese Mountain dogs and treasured the friends that she made through her home and her many creative hobbies including piano and Scottish Country dancing. She moved from Richmond in the UK to Canada in 1965 and was an inspiringly independent and positive person. I miss our regular telephone calls.

— Yasmin Raphael

I enjoyed meeting Mary several times. Twice in Hove, East Sussex, UK and of course when Michael & I went to see her in Vancouver, it was a very special holiday.

— Claire Bourdin

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/mary-raphael

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