

Kathy Nemis

OCTOBER 8, 2022

It is with profound grief that we share the news that our beloved sister and daughter Kathy (Katherine) Nemis died on Saturday, October 8th, near Kendall, Washington.

She was hiking Lake Ann Trail on her beloved Mt Baker and laughing with her best friend when a tree cracked and fell and killed her instantly.

Kathy loved the outdoors. She hiked all summer and back-country skied all winter. The mountains were her heaven.

She skied many places in the world and did extreme crevasse and avalanche training. She was a ski patrol and instructor at Grouse and constant at Cypress and Seymour.

A pleasant day for her was to skin up a slope, ski down, then do it all again.

She worked as a park ranger at Stanley Park and instructor at BCIT (Chemistry/lab).

In the summer she was always in the mountains, hiking and camping. An avid photographer, she took visually stunning scenic photos of each place she visited. She journeyed to Ellesmere Island and camped for days seeing polar bears and other wildlife. She climbed many of the highest peaks in North America, Summiting Bear Creek Spire, Challenger Peak and Wheeler Peak. She would get so excited planning a new adventure. She did all the trails - West Coast trail several



times, John Muir trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Buce Trail and so many others. She would pack up her car and just drive somewhere, camp and hike for days on her own. She was a leader at the Vancouver Outdoor Club for Women and was out almost daily in the local mountains.

For many years she and her dearest friend Sheila owned a small place at the foot of Mount Baker, and she was there every weekend hiking and skiing and living exactly the life she wanted to live.

There is some small blessing in knowing she was in her element, loving the forest and had her great friend with her when she died. There is comfort in knowing she didn't suffer and was not alone.

We cling to the thought that her last one was how beautiful everything was around her.

Kathy was born in North Bay, ON but grew up in Midland and graduated from Midland Secondary School, going on to Guelph University for her Bachelor of Chemistry. At a very young age she showed her love for the outdoors volunteering and working at the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and enjoying snowshoeing and learning to ski in the local mountains. She always found much enjoyment in the outdoors keeping active and with the nature she so loved. She could identify almost every bird and plant in Ontario and soon learned again when she made the move to BC in the 80's.

Kathy leaves behind her sister Jane Nemis, Mother Mary (Brazzoni) Nemis and Father (late) Peter Nemis.

She also leaves her best-friend Sheila Clare who was with her when she died. Many many friends and colleagues from work, the Vancouver Women's Outdoor Club and others have reached out and we thank you for your kind words and stories.

Kathy was brought back to Vancouver this week and cremated (private) and a memorial will be held at a later date.

Please feel free to reach out with any stories and experiences you have had with her. They would be so comforting.

To the park guides and fire department in Kendall Washington and to Deputy Ben - thank you for the care and respect you gave my sister.

Please know she was doing what she loved.

Messages of Condolence

Although I never had the honour or pleasure to know Kathy personally I do know her sister Jane and my heart goes out to her and her Mom..as well as to her closest friend Sheila at her sudden and sad passing from this world. From all I have read about Kathy she was a truly vibrant and loving person who will be greatly missed by many

May she Rest in Peace.

— **Danny Casavant**

I'll always remember Kathy as Jane's big sister. I didn't know her very well but do remember she was around at a few(ok maybe more than a few) parties we attended in our youth. Kathy kept her eyes on Jane to make sure all was OK. I also have a memory of Kathy playing with an Airedale terrier in their yard. My heart goes out to Jane and her Mom.

My deepest sympathies to all of Kathy's family and friends

Tina

— Tina Vartiainen

I am deeply saddened to hear of Kathy's passing and I extend my heartfelt condolences to Mary, Jane, and Sheila. For a couple of years in the late 90's, I was lucky to share the upper floor of a lovely character house in East Vancouver with Kathy. Our suite was always a hive of activity, with Kathy planning her next hike or camping trip. I always admired her independent and courageous spirit, and her sense of adventure. She was a very special person, and I can't imagine the grief that you are all experiencing and hope that you're getting all the support and help you need to make this journey a little easier.

— Jan Mitchell

I Knew Kathy through the Outdoor Club and shared many hikes on the North Shore mountains and near Mt Baker. She was defined by her love of nature, shaping her work life to maximize outside activities. Her solo trek of the John Muir Trail inspired me. Her commitment to holistic health included shunning pain killers.

Beyond the epic, I knew Kathy as a caring woman. A few years ago I was planning to accompany her and others on a backpacking trip in the Cascades. Unfortunately I had to cancel to fly east to my brother's funeral. Kathy sent me a condolence card - a simple, thoughtful gesture that touched me deeply.

Mary, Jane, and dear Sheila I send my sincere sympathies to you all. I know she will always be in your hearts and in her beloved mountains.

— Jane Richards

Kathy and I spent many hours riding our Park Ranger bikes around Stanley Park over the years. Her passion for the Ranger job was infectious. I was always impressed with Kathy's "let's go" attitude when exploring, patrolling, and protecting the precious natural environments she loved so much. At any point Kathy could pivot from a high-energy bike patrol to stop and patiently speak to any park visitors that had questions or just to engage in a nice chat about the day. I can hear her happy voice and her unique laughter when I think about it. She knew so much about nature and wildlife and it always seemed there was a new adventure on the horizon. Where did she get so much energy!!?? When we opened a public face to face Park Ranger Station in Stanley Park to engage with the public, Kathy's thoughtful approach to public education became the standard for all others who would take on the role. We have plans to rename the kiosk to Ranger Station 6 in honour of Kathy's Ranger Badge number 6. Her legacy and compassion for the Rangers will forever motivate and inspire me. I will always try to be more like Kathy, learning more about nature and always having another adventure on the horizon.

— Chris Penton

I worked with Kathy as a park ranger for several years. She was an absolutely lovely person and the epitome of what being a park ranger means. She was so smart, funny, hardworking, kind, and had a love for the outdoors that was unparalleled. I am so very sorry that she has left us, but I assure you her memory will live on in the hearts of everyone she touched.

— Mike Foster

My condolences to Jane and her Mum, Mary. When Cathy (&Jane) was a teenager she babysat our children. We knew her and her family through the Midland Penetang Field Naturalists Club. It looks like Cathy followed a career and interests based on her experience as a Junior Naturalist. So sorry that she was taken from this life so early.

Sincerely,

Judy, Bob (deceased 2019), Dan, Becky and Paul Whittam

— Judy Whittam

Kathy was a customer of mine here at BCIT first, before we became good conversation buddies whenever our paths crossed here at work. Her tales of what she did in the summer always outpaced mine, she fully enjoyed the outdoors and all it offered. I will miss her dearly and am glad I got to know her as well as I did.

— Scott Watts

Oh how I miss Kathy. I miss her laugh, her love of Nature, fresh powder, backpacking, granola, chocolate, green olives and hard cheese. Every time I see the Golden Ears from my vantage point across the border, it forms a lump in my throat. Any moment that Kathy could be in the mountains she would be, often, with her soulmate and best friend in the world, Sheila.

Sheila, and then Kathy befriended me and became my best hiking partners and friends for years. Kathy would often drive south to my town in the states and flop down on our “purple couch of repose” after inhaling whatever food I made to treat her. She was so fun to give gifts to as she thoroughly and completely enjoyed receiving. She loved deep conversations about intrapersonal growth and thrived on learning about herself and becoming a more integrated and healthy human being. She studied things with gusto and applied what she learned. I watched her grow in her capacity to deal with the suffering of life. She was sensitive, cried when she needed to and flowed it all. She she was such a natively upbeat person, too.

Incredibly capable at whatever she wanted learn to do.

Oh and how she was devoted to Jane and Mary both. She loved Mary’s food and flowers and always was devoted to watching over Jane.

The night before she died, she was so excited that she got the bumper put back on the back of her old car, for free! She bought the mechanic some cookies and saved one for herself. She was so happy, and told me the mechanic said that the bumper would outlive her car.

Little did we know that the next day would be her last. I can honestly say that she died happy.

I am a better person, because I have been graced with her friendship. She taught me much. Her wild spirit flies free.

We will always love you sweet friend. I miss your smile and Big Hugs.

— **Laura W.**

January 26th,2023

I just read these comments this morning. How wonderful to hear these kind words about the closest person in my life. I was given a gift for 25-27 years with my dearest friend and we had a life of outdoors and adventure. She was so good in the backcountry and lived for so many kinds of adventures. She was truly kind and good to people and I'm truly amazed at how many people she knew and how much they cared and loved her. We have truly lost a very Special person, full of life, fun and tons of talent.

I was truly grateful that I could be with her that day so she did not pass away alone. We were having the time of our lives and had been out of town on adventures for 8 week-ends in a row. If we were not at Whistler we were South in the Mount Baker area. She lived a very full life and should have written a book on all the adventures she had done over the years.

I know her spirit is free and she will continue with me in the mountains and bring along her amazing energy.

In the end there is Love and this was the gift I was given all those years.

— Sheila Clare

I was very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Kathy at the Park Rangers. In my first year she and I partnered up on bike patrol. She took me under her wing and showed me the way. I always learned so much from her. She knew everything I had questions about, so much knowledge she had to share.

The last time I saw Kathy was a few years ago when I was on a summer holiday at Savary Island. Another secret BC spot that people like Kathy know well! I was relaxing on the beach with friends when she walked by with a friend. Who knew that that moment, shooting the breeze and catching up while on holiday, would be the last time I saw her. I'm glad our paths crossed that day. A happy memory, seeing her in her element, on the wild wet west coast. An image I will never forget now...

Thank you Kathy

— **Alex Wilcott**

I first met Kathy in the 1980's when we were both students in chemistry at the University of Guelph. Circumstances were such that we often managed to be in the same places. We both lived at the same time in Quebec City and Vancouver. I went to dinner at her place in Montreal. She was a good friend and I shall miss her.

— **Sean Moore**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/nemis-kathy>

Printed on July 29, 2026