Beverly Ann Sommer

FEBRUARY 4, 2021



Bev left us peacefully at Langley Hospice on the evening of 4 February 2021 with Warren, her loving husband and life partner of 38 years at her side.

Bev was diagnosed with myeloma in April 2019. She faced her disease with rare grace, courage, and pragmatism, encouraged by an outpouring of love and support from her family and friends. She passed away without fear or regrets, her thoughts focusing on the welfare and happiness of those she left behind.

Bev was predeceased by her parents Bill and Nan MacPherson and her nephew Stuart MacPherson. She is survived by Warren; brothers Fred MacPherson and Douglas MacPherson (Quynh Nguyen); sisters Patricia MacPherson (Don Reid), Gilian MacPherson (Dave Leeson), and Sheila (Mike) McWade; honorary sister Alexis Davidson; brother-in-law Bruce Sommer (Bunny Sanne); sisters-in-law Judi Sommer and Robin Sommer; uncle John (Denise) Koshman and aunt Sandy Thack; nephews Ryan McWade, Robert (Sheena) Gibbs, Marc MacPherson, Michael (Glenys) Bull, Rick Sommer, and Ian (Sue) Sommer; nieces Heather McWade (Kiel Burwell), Sarah (Danny) Cooley, Louise Nguyen, Kathi Bull (Dan Herlihy), Kat (Henry) Derksen, and Karen Sommer; as well as many cousins, including Susan Thack and Bev Grekul; and several great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces and nephews.

Bev was born in Vancouver nine months after Warren (in the same hospital) and often wondered if that was coincidence or destiny. Her parents left the West Coast with their children while Bev was still an infant, raising their growing family in Guelph, Ontario. Bev had many fond memories of her childhood there. After graduating from high school she studied history at the University of Guelph where she was awarded her Bachelor's degree. She subsequently completed her Master's degree at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Ever in search of new adventures, Bev moved back to British Columbia where she embarked on a distinguished career in the province's cultural sector, working as an educator at the Burnaby Village Museum (where Bev and Warren met), the Vancouver Museum, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 1987 she accepted the directorship of the Surrey Museum where she secured the support and resources required to bring the facility into the modern age. Bev subsequently oversaw the restoration of the Historic Stewart Farm and the launch of its public services. She had a remarkable ability to bring community members, elected officials, staff and volunteers together in developing shared visions and the will to turn ideas into reality. As Manager of Heritage Services for the City of Surrey she fostered the formation of the Friends of the Surrey Museum and Archives Society and helped secure the resources required for the development, under her leadership, of new facilities for what are now the Museum of Surrey and the Surrey Archives.

But Bev did not want to be defined by her work. In her spare time and throughout her retirement she was a voracious reader of contemporary literature and an avid cook. She revelled in the company of her loved and loving canine companions, wire fox terriers Bertie, Sprout, and Tucker. She enjoyed gardening and excelled at home improvement. She had few rivals when it came to planning vacations, carefully researching the best places to stay, eat, or shop (particularly for shoes). She especially relished spending meaningful time with family and friends. Her sisters often benefited from her keen sense of fashion as the fortunate recipients of

pass-along items of clothing.

Bev loved travel, ever eager to immerse herself in new experiences, to see new sights, and to encounter new people. The return flight from one destination had scarcely landed when she began to plan for the next excursion overseas. Bev and Warren's travels took them on multiple journeys to Central and Atlantic Canada, Southeast Asia, Polynesia, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and Western Europe. Winter trips to sunny Barbados became an annual tradition.

Bev and Warren delighted in their frequent trips to the British Isles. London could have been their second home. Bev enjoyed the city's pervasive history as well as its live theatre, restaurants, and myriad museums (especially their gift shops). When the current pandemic and her illness made travel impossible, Bev found stimulation through keeping up with the daily news and derived considerable pleasure watching the latest dramas, mysteries, and travel programs on television, especially those on PBS and Knowledge Network.

Bev impacted people in so many positive ways, whether as a friend, colleague, or family member. She was an engaging conversationalist. She was smart, savvy, and confident, but always modest about her accomplishments. She was a creative problem solver who embraced her projects with unwavering passion and determination. Bev possessed a quiet inner strength and a remarkable ability to inspire others. She was a principled leader, compassionate mentor, and dedicated friend. Her counsel was always wise, thoughtful, and insightful. Bev will be remembered for her unbridled generosity, her unique sense of humour and legendary laugh, but above all, for her devotion to her husband and friends and for the love she felt for her family.

The family is grateful to Dr. Paul Galbraith and the nursing staff at the B.C. Cancer Agency in Abbotsford as well as to the staff of Langley Hospice for their sensitive care of Bev during the final days of her illness. In lieu of flowers Bev's family

would appreciate memorial gifts to the Canadian Cancer Society, the B.C. Cancer Foundation, Langley Hospice, or a charity of your choice.

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

Messages of Condolence

I can’t remember when I first met Bev, but in that moment realized what a perfect partner she was for Warren. Over the years, the three of us have shared many meals and conversations , always enjoyable, and often I went away with a piece of advice...usually having to do with travel. One of our final times together was in beloved Barbadoes with members of my family, Bev, and Warren. A remarkable, accomplished woman, who made me laugh and feel welcome. I shall miss her greatly, and deeply admire the courage and resilience she displayed these last couple of years. My condolences to those she leaves behind, and most especially her life mate, Warren.

— Mary Philpot

We knew Bev as a colleague, peer and good friend and always enjoyed our many interactions. She so often inspired us and taught us to always enjoy a good laugh and to enjoy the big successes as well as the smaller ones.

Bon voyage Bev.
Love Tara and Murray

— Tara Douglas and Murray Frost

Bev started coming to my hair salon for haircuts in June of 2017. I had met Bev and Warren as they were walking tucker in front of Blacksmith Bakery in fort Langley I saw her for a hair cut on dec 23 2020. Bev was fun to have as a client she made me laugh with her witty comments about varying TV personality and politicians. She would always say “ cut my hair but don’t make me look like the queen or like Steven Harper.” She did not want a coiffed look. She insisted on having a messy textured look. On her first few salon visit she brought a photo of a German wolf hound dog. Look it up and you will see what I mean. That made me laugh so much. No other client had even done such a thing. I used to tell her hat she should be a stand up comedian. The way she described mondain every day situation was even funny she had a way to describe everything with just the right touch of sarcasm. I loved having her in my chair. So glad I was able to see her on December 23. What an amazing soul. I really will miss her. Rest In Peace beautiful Bev. Pierre (Bev s hairdresser)

— Pierre Marchildon

Sending heartfelt sympathies to the MacPherson family.

— Leslie Grekul

My time working for and with Bev at the Surrey Museum during the 80's was a pleasure and I am truly sorry Warren to hear of your loss. Bev's personality and work ethics were to be admired and she will be missed. RIP Bev.

— Fay Boyland

I met Bev when I went to work for her at the Surrey Museum, cataloguing the Hooser textile collection. A funny, funny woman - she always made me laugh - and she was incredibly supportive of her staff. We talked about dogs (terriers vs. border collies) and textiles (rug hooking vs. weaving) and found commonalities in our differences. I will miss the idea that she is not in her lovely house in Ft. Langley, digging in her garden and laughing at her dogs. Condolences to her dear Warren.

— Ann Embra

I was so saddened to hear of Bev's passing. We worked together at the City of Surrey....and I have such fond memories of our time together. Bev's passion for her work and commitment to her profession were to be admired. Bev could always make me laugh....her quick wit and her sense of humour could always light up a room and cause a stir! She had a remarkable gift....and will be sadly missed.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Warren and Bev's family at this difficult time.

— Shannon Harvey-Renner

Bev was a remarkable mentor in my life. After offering me the job as Surrey Heritage Services' first marketing coordinator, she gave me opportunities to grow and learn that I would never have had otherwise. Even after my move to the Okanagan, she was incredibly generous with advice as I looked for new opportunities. My gratitude is immense - I wouldn't be where I am today without her. I hope I have the chance to pay it forward. Rest in peace, dear Bev!

— Dani Brown

I was saddened to read of Bev’s passing. She was a lovely lady and you enjoyed many happy years together.
Remember that though Bev is gone, she will be always in your heart. My sincere condolences.

— Dianne McCafferty

We’ve all been there walking along the street with our Wire Hair Fox Terrier and someone pops out of the woodwork and says .... I have a dog like that ... or I grew up with one of those dogs... they were the best. Well that is exactly how I met Beverly Sommer.

My then dog Daisy and I set out for a walk one day at our usual spot of Fort Langley. I was going to meet up with a friend. It was around lunch time but I managed to find a parking spot in front of a hardware store. While getting Daisy out of her crate in the car the door of the hardware store opens and this crazed lady runs out yelling I got a dog like that, I got a dog like that!! We chatted cause all us Wire Hair Fox Terriers owners are friendly....like where did you get your dog ..... Ann Gold a well known breeder so we chatted about our breed of dogs and breeders, grooming etc. Eventually Warren joined us to find out he in his youth had worked for another well known Wire Fox Terier breeder. Eventually and sadly I had to leave this interesting chat as I was meeting someone on the trail. We exchanged emails and said we would maybe meet up one day when they had their dog with them. Left wondering if that would happen.

Indeed it did as we met the next weekend and many other weekends thereafter. Through conversations we realized we were both about to retire so evolved many dog walks together and solved many world issues during them. Beyond that we also met with other Wire Fox Terrier owners for a Sunday walk.

Overtime we also had many dinners at each other’s home. I was never forgotten for one being on my own and was invited every year at thanksgiving and New Years for a delicious turkey dinners with all the trimmings and became one of the family.

Through it all I found a life long friend hence earned an honorable sister mention in her obit. She will be a huge miss in my life!! My heart goes out to her husband Warren as he struggles with his loss.

Alexis Davidson.

— Alexis Davidson

I met Bev approximately 30 years ago. She was the partner of my new colleague Warren. Initially, our commonality was in our careers. But that soon changed. As I spent more time in her company, I quickly came to appreciate the many areas of common interest we shared. I enjoyed her candor, authenticity, clarity, and empathy. And, I particularly appreciated the depth of her relationship with Warren. She will be in my bank of wonderful memories for the remainder of my time. And, I will stay connected with her best friend and soulmate. Thanks, Bev.

— Doug Brimacombe

I am so sorry to hear of Beverley's death. I worked with her at the City of Surrey and found her to be a very caring and open person. My favourite memory of Bev was her sense of humour. It often crept up on you and seemed to come out of nowhere, but always left you laughing. Just thinking back on those times makes me smile. She was a remarkable woman and accomplished so much. I shall think of her often with happiness. My condolences to Warren and family.

— Kory Swaele

I was so saddened to learn that Bev had died earlier this month. She was a wonderfully accomplished woman with a sparkling personality. I had the pleasure of first knowing her decades ago when we were colleagues at the Vancouver Museum. Her talents shone there, and in every position she filled in the years that followed. She had a vision for the place that a good museum held in a community and she brought it to life, especially in Surrey. She leaves a great legacy in Surrey particularly and special memories among the host of people who were fellow museologists and cultural historians. Sending deepest condolences to Warren and to all her family.

— Robert D. Watt

My wife Beverley and I send our deepest condolences to Warren and Bev's wider family. She was a valued colleague and friend for over 40 years. Her professional accomplishments demonstrated the highest level of excellence and innovation: at the Vancouver Museum she pioneered new approaches to museum education, and in Surrey she led the successful campaign to build a new museum and to provide Surrey with a focussed look at the diversity of its historical development. As a colleague she was always interested and supportive and I valued her advice and opinions; as a friend she was warm and equally supportive. She has been taken from Warren and her friends far too soon. This is enormously sad, but we all have our happy memories and our heartfelt appreciation for a life well-lived.

— Robin Inglis

My heart goes out to Warren and family. I am so sorry to learn of Bev's passing. The diagnosis especially hit home as a dear friend has been battling myeloma since August 2019, and that gives me some slight inkling of what Bev and Warren have gone through together. But, like everything else, they went through it together -- they were soulmates, and shared a relationship to envy.

On a professional level, I know that Bev's contributions to the cultural sector were many, and the museum / archives community in Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey, and well beyond benefitted enormously from her dedication, wisdom, generosity, vision, and energy.

On Bev and Warren's trips East, I didn't get to see Bev often as she was inevitably tied up with family when Warren came to Ottawa to do research at the Archives. I do recall the last time Bev and Warren were in Ottawa, though —a lovely evening of lively conversation over a rather unexceptionable meal in a Mexican restaurant near our house. Talk centred on museums and archives, friends, dogs, and, of course, travel. Seems we were always comparing notes (which I now know were Bev's!) on what to see, where to go, what to do in Barbados, UK, Greece, and Maui, but never did manage to connect on a tropical beach since Bev and Warren went to Barbados in November-December and we went to Hawai'i in December and Barbados in February. But the restaurant and tourist advice, which I always printed and filed, was always excellent and oh-so-accurate!

Warren, you have been a dear, if long-distance, friend for almost 5 decades, and I cherish your friendship now, a continent away, as I always have. News of Bev's death is terrible indeed. Yet, how very fortunate that you were to have Bev as a life partner and kindred spirit for those 38 years. Such a blessing and a source of joyful memories. I send my deepest condolences —and love, as ever.

— Joan M Schwartz

We were "Barbados" pals, but actually used to live in the Lower Mainland as well. Warren, thank you so very much for the email that must have been very difficult for you to do. We always looked forward to seeing you both at the Blue Orchids Beach Hotel in Barbados. Bev was a joy to spend time with and will be missed by all. Our sincerest condolences to you and your families.

— Lesley & Robert Bazaluk

So sorry to hear of Bev's passing. We were colleagues at City of Surrey for many years, and I always admired her passion for heritage. She had a profound influence on heritage in Surrey and commanded much respect, for countless projects. She made a difference, with her dedication and commitment. Deep condolences to her friends, family and colleagues. Her contributions to Surrey will last long into the future.

— Brenda Clark
