

Martha Suderman

JULY 23, 2023

Obituary of Martha Sudermann, 1925 - 2023

Martha Sudermann was born to Abram and Alvina Peters in 1925, in Prangenau, in the Molotschna, district of Russia (now Melitopol, Ukraine) after the Russian Civil War. Fearing further political unrest and worsening conditions for the Mennonites, her parents decided to leave their homeland for Canada when she was almost 2 years old. They settled near Wembley, Alberta where they began a life of farming. One of Martha's brother's, Abe, was born enroute to Canada, and 4 more siblings, Margaret, John, Mary, and Henry were born in Canada. Martha's mother died when Martha was 14 years old, at which time she had to quit school and look after the household and her youngest siblings. Her youngest brother Henry was just one year old. Life for Martha became one of steady work from morning until bedtime, with time off on Sundays to go to church and visit with friends. Her household work included, cooking, baking, preserving food, sewing, mending, knitting, laundry, ironing, and cleaning; and most of this was done without electricity or the modern appliances of that time.

At age 15, Martha accepted the Lord as her Savior. After this she sought God's will and guidance with all life's decisions. When she was 18 and her sister Margaret was old enough to take over more household responsibilities, Martha spent a winter at Didsbury Bible School, in Alberta. In early 1946 Martha's dad bought a farm in Rosedale, BC and by March the whole family moved. Martha had said, "We left the snow drifts of Alberta, for beautiful British Columbia where everything



was green, and the daffodils were opening.” They settled on a 20-acre dairy farm with 13 cows, a few pigs, and some chickens. On the farm they made hay, and planted strawberries, raspberries, beans, and corn as cash crops. Martha attended another year of Bible School in BC. When she was 27, she moved to Vancouver to complete her grade 12 education at Surpass Pacific College. While going to school, she worked for her room and board at the home of a doctor and his family on Angus drive. She thoroughly enjoyed school, her work, and the new friends she’d met. She had said that it was a wonderful year. Although she had thought about becoming a teacher or a nurse after, she felt God was guiding her in a different direction. She got a job working in the kitchen at Vancouver General Hospital, and later left to spend 2 more years at a Bible College in Winnipeg. When she returned to Vancouver, she spent a summer as a group counsellor at a kid’s camp, taught DVBS (Daily Vacation Bible School), and worked at a home for girls.

Soon after this time Martha met Bill (William) Sudermann, whom she later married. Together they had 5 children: Edward, Marian, Ronald, Gladys, and William. They first lived on Marine Drive in Vancouver, but in 1963 purchased a 2-acre piece of land on River Road, in Richmond, BC. It had on it, a house, a barn, a few sheds, and plenty of room for farming. At first, they had a dairy cow, then some goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits, cats and dogs, and a large vegetable garden and many fruit trees. With much work, they were able to partially live off the land for a good number of years. The family regularly attended Prince of Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond. Bill who was employed as a heavy-duty machinist, had become unwell, and unable to work once all their 5 children were in school. They quickly became poor, and Martha spend the next number of years, stretching pennies and working tirelessly to look after the household. Her children had their chores to do and helped as needed, but it was still work form morning until evening once again for Martha, with Sundays mostly free for church, time with family, playing games, and visiting with friends and relatives.

When all her children were past the elementary school years, Martha went to work a few days a week as a house cleaner. At this time, she got her drivers licence so she could transport herself to work and back. Martha was pleased that she was now able to financially help support her family and enjoyed the freedom of getting away some days and doing something different.

In 1980, when Bill was particularly ill, Martha made the decision to sell their property and move to a smaller, more manageable piece of land. She settled on a ½ acre lot, with a 5-bedroom house in North Delta. After the move, Bill recovered from his illness. By now the children were in their late teens and early twenties, and either at Bible school, trade school, high school, or working. Martha continued to attend church, bible studies, women's groups, and work on missions' projects, as she'd always done, but now was able to participate even more with her parenting duties mostly out of the way. She always had craft projects on the go, and even took drawing and painting classes during these years. Martha took short trips around BC with Bill, and other trips with her sisters, including a trip back to Alberta to visit their hometown and their mother's grave. She also travelled twice to Germany to see relatives.

During the late 80's to the mid 90's, 4 of Bill and Martha's 5 children got married, and in the years following started their own families. Martha was a very involved, caring, and loving grandmother (Oma), and cherished all her grandchildren: Max, Celeste, Philip, Joel, Josef, Alexander, Emily, Leah, Hannah, Rachel, and Jason. Bill passed away in 1999 due to health complications. Martha then sold the house and moved to a nearby condominium. When she was 81, she had a major stroke, and began living at the Kinsmen Lodge in Surrey. The following year she moved to the Broadway Pentecostal lodge in Vancouver. She had made some recovery but still needed extended care, and increasingly so for the remainder of her days. She began to show signs of cognitive decline several years after arriving at Broadway Lodge, which gradually increased. After living in care for 17 years, Martha passed

away peacefully on the morning of July 23, 2023, at the age of 98.

Martha will be remembered as one who lived a life devoted to God, her family, her friends, and being of service to others. She did everything in a calm, quiet, humble, honest, and patient fashion. It was with one faithful and steadfast foot in front of the other, that she got all the way through her life. Although she will be dearly missed, her family celebrates with her in knowing her long awaited wish for eternity has finally come to pass.

Martha was survived by all her children, Edward, Marian, Ron, Gladys, Will; and grandchildren, Max, Celeste, Philip, Joel, Josef, Alexander, Emily, Leah, Hannah, Rachel, and Jason; her sister Mary Peters, brother Henry Peters & sister-in-law Evelyn Peters, sister-in-law Margaret Peters, and her many nieces and nephews. Martha was predeceased by her (in order of occurrence): mother Alvina (Schultz) Peters, father Abraham Peters, stepmother Elisabeth (Baerg) Peters, brother-in-law Jake Sudermann, sister-in-law Erna Sudermann, brother Abe Peters, nephew Wally Peters, husband Bill Sudermann, sister Margaret (Peters) Kropp, sister-in-law Anne Peters, sister-in-law Roni Dyck, nephew Bill Sudermann, brother John Peters, and brother-in-law Art Kropp.

It is with sincere appreciation that Martha's family would like to express our gratitude to the staff at Broadway Lodge, and her 3rd floor personal care teams for providing her with loving care over the past 17 years. We are also grateful to her relatives and friends who have provided her with friendship, fellowship, and support when needed, and who have appreciated her for the dear and gentle soul that she was and is.

Special thanks to officiating Pastor (of New Hope Church) Wayne Driedger, church administrator Daniela Filby, caterers Daniela and her mom, our relatives who helped in various ways prior to and during the service, staff at Alternatives Funeral Services, staff at Valley View Cemetery, and all who attended Martha's funeral

service.



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/suderman-martha>

Printed on July 29, 2026