Mia Roelofje Thornhill



SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

Mia Roelofje Thornhill

1923 – 2022

Peacefully in Calgary on September 7, 2022.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband in 2008, Philip George Thornhill. She is lovingly remembered by a few dear friends, nieces and nephews, her brother, Johan (Heleen); her grandchildren, Jenny, Eric and Sean; and her children, Frankie (Arthur), Jan (Fred) & Bruce (Lisa).

Our Dutch mother was forthright to a fault and said things like, “I’m very affectionate; I just don’t show it.” She truly was a singular human being, who, the day The Hague was liberated by Canadian forces, climbed a tank and kissed a soldier on a dare and married him soon after; who, once in Canada, gamely signed on as camp cook when our father-to-be’s summer jobs took him deep into the northern Ontario bush where our mother-to-be had to fend off bears during the day while the men were gone, but who, nonetheless, always, to the end, thought herself unremarkable; who refused to give her children the Velveeta cheese and peanut butter and jam on white bread we enjoyed at camp, instead feeding us smoked eel and liverwurst on rye; and who took great pride in being a cultural snob, but was nonetheless able to talk to anyone and be genuinely interested in what they had to say. She loved art and was an amazing painter herself, especially after she went large and abstract in her late 70s. She loved dogs. Openly. She also loved trees and flowers and rocks and chocolate and cherries and really garlicky

shrimp. And she loved books. She loved books so much that she only locked her door so no one could sneak in and steal them. And she loved us – maybe not quite as much as she loved dogs – but enough.

Her ashes will eventually be interred alongside our father’s at St. James Cemetery.

Messages of Condolence

I was sorry to hear about the passing of your mum. I am sure that you will miss her dearly -- she was quite a character. She (and your dad) were always a part of my parents' lives (that Falconbridge connection). I was lucky to have had a lovely visit with her about four years ago when she lived on Avenue Road in Toronto.

— Roberta Bergman

We never met Mia but it sounds like she was a very interesting, talented and real person to know. We would like to leave Jan and the family our deepest condolences on their loss.

— Bob and Brenda

Oct 22. We just learned about Mia's passing today and found her spirited obituary in the Globe and Mail. She is with us artistically every day because many of her paintings are on our walls. We loved her frankness, open mind and delight in keeping in touch. What we remember especially were her Boxing Day open houses for employees of The Falconbridge Lab: the table laden with Indonesian (?) dishes. Frankie and Janet were slave labour for the event because it took many hands to pull them off. What a great hostess she was all her life. And hurray to being a cultural snob.

Gail and Gerry Crawford, Mississauga, Ont.

— Gail and Gerry Crawford

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