

Catherine "Jill" Wade

DECEMBER 17, 2020

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Catherine Jill Wade. Her passing was peaceful and thanks to the kindness and compassion of the medical staff at Vancouver General Hospital, her loving husband Don Sinclair was allowed to be with her. Jill will be greatly missed by Don and members of her, as well as of Don's family. In her family, her passing is mourned by her brother John Wade (Marilyn), her sister Judy Wade, her stepsister Doreen Moore (Richard), her niece Marianne Wade (Davey) and her nephews Frank Wade (Carmela), William Falk (Leslie), Michael Falk and numerous great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins on both sides of her family. Jill was also very close to members of Don's family and her passing is especially mourned by Don's sisters Pat Rodger and Carole Trush (Larry) and their nephew James Cameron, as well as by many other nieces, nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews. Finally, Jill's passing is also mourned by her many friends. The families and Don would like to express their everlasting gratitude to the close friends and family members who provided ongoing support to Jill and Don through a difficult and heart-breaking journey over the last several years.



Jill was a kind and generous soul who loved life, people and animals. She was also an intellectually gifted academic who contributed significantly to a variety of disciplines. She was born in Winnipeg of parents Amy Wade (Newton) and Francis Wade and grew up in Norwood, the English-speaking enclave of St. Boniface. Jill formed many childhood friendships which she nurtured and treasured throughout

her entire life. She also had strong connections to her immediate family, but she was also connected to her extended family. She spent many happy times with the Newton clan in Roblin and for most of her life she maintained close contact with her aunts, uncles and many cousins, both maternal and paternal.

After her early education in Norwood, Jill completed a BA degree at United College (University of Manitoba) in 1963 and in 1964 she moved to Vancouver for graduate studies in Architectural History at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She obtained an MA degree in 1966 and a Bachelor's degree in Library Science in 1967 and then worked for two years as a Fine Arts librarian at UBC.

After a sabbatical year, Jill returned to Winnipeg where she held the head librarian position in the School of Architecture at the University of Manitoba from 1970-1973. During this time, she met Don, her future partner and husband (although they didn't know this at that moment). She returned to Vancouver in 1973 to resume her education. There she re-connected with Don and they formed a loving relationship that extended over 46 years. Then in 1974, Jill began a two-year position with the Vancouver Art Gallery, cataloguing the permanent collection. Jill and Don were married in 1976 and after spending a year in Davis California (Don's postdoctoral research), they returned to Vancouver. For the next two years, Jill worked part-time as a librarian with the Vancouver Public Library and also undertook contract work, first with the Government of Canada, cataloguing private collections of Inuit art and later with the B.C. Government, involving a collaborative historical study of placer mining in the Cariboo.

Excited by her exposure to academic historical research, Jill went on to earn an MA degree in B.C. social history at UBC, under the guidance of Bob MacDonald (who became a close friend) and subsequently, a Doctorate in social history at Simon Fraser University. Jill's graduate research resulted in the publication of many articles in history journals and, most notably, her epic book "Houses for All,

The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver 1919-1950". For this achievement, she received an award from the City of Vancouver and the book's title has become a rallying cry for a new generation of housing activists. After receiving her Doctorate, Jill taught B.C. and Canadian history at a distance with Open Learning (more recently a component of Thompson Rivers University) for 22 years. For many years, she was an active member of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada (SSAC). She loved her involvement in SSAC, especially since she established many new friendships and also because it allowed her to travel to cities throughout Canada for annual meetings. As Jill used to say, "join the SSAC and you will get to see Canada".

Through many wonderful vacations at the Alders, Jill and Don fell in love with the Comox Valley. They eventually acquired an acreage with a cabin in Merville, where they spent many happy days. Jill embarked on a new chapter of historical research centred on the area around Merville and she continued this research for a couple of years after her retirement.

Jill's passionate love of music was legendary and her taste was highly eclectic and included classical (she held a VSO subscription for more than 30 years), folk music (e.g., the Vancouver Folk Festival and Rogue Folk Club) and rock and roll (especially the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and the Moody Blues). She also had an enduring connection to the Vancouver art scene. Jill loved her books and spent long hours reading everything from non-fiction books and novels to murder mysteries.

Jill loved all animals, but especially cats and their cabin in Merville became affectionately known as the Cat Ranch (a name bestowed by their nephew, James Cameron). (People often warned Jill that she was only one cat shy of "cat lady" status.)

Jill always had a passionate interest in politics. Her firm commitment to social justice meant that her natural political home was the New Democratic Party, certainly a major departure from her mother's Tory heritage. She and Don worked diligently on many NDP election campaigns and on NDP activities between elections. Even though Jill wasn't religious, her favourite quotation was the famous grace delivered by J.S. Woodsworth, the first leader of the CCF (the forerunner of the NDP) and the founding father of Canadian Social Democracy:

"We are thankful for these and all of the good things of life. We recognize that they are part of our common heritage and come to us through the efforts of our brothers and sisters the world over. What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. To this end, may we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles."

We were indeed fortunate to have been able to share Jill's life.

A celebration of Jill's life will be held when COVID allows it. People who wish to honour Jill are asked to consider making donations to the Salvation Army, the Union Gospel Mission or the SPCA.

Messages of Condolence

We were very lucky to count Jill as a friend for over 40 years. She was warm and thoughtful with a great perspective on history and politics. I well remember meeting Jill back in the 1970s and having dinner with her and Don in their West End apartment. I knew right away we were fellow travellers. More recently it was fun to reconnect through our many Friday evening pub nights with friends, latterly at Stages Bar and Bistro on Broadway in Vancouver. Even though Jill struggled with cognitive issues late in life I could always tell she enjoyed the company and had a cheerful outlook. She was a genuinely good person and will be missed.

— **Ron Johnson**

Don and Family

I was so very sorry to hear of Jill's passing. I was most impressed with her history of giving to all and her passion for social justice. She was quite a gal!

I too lost my wife suddenly when she was too young. I know it is hard to believe but slowly you will find her strength will start to support you. I don't know why but it happens.

Stay strong for all the younger generations that will also miss Jill. You will heal but not forget.

John

— **John O'Brien**

Please accept my condolence.

Jill was a good friend and colleague. I will miss her dearly.

Rocky

— **Rocky M Mirza**

Dear Don,

We send our sincerest condolences to you on the passing of dear Jill. You were a wonderful companion to Jill over many years and of course a huge help to her in the last few years.

I first met Jill at UBC Fine Arts Library in 1967. Jill was then the planning librarian there and she and i established a lasting friendship from this time- 53 years ago! We go through life with many friendships but Jill's for me was one of the most loyal and enduring. I will always remember her infectious giggle, her wonderful sense of humour and of course her extraordinary intellect. Jill was inately humble about her abilities and her lack of ego was also refreshing.. Jiil and I shared a love of local pottery and I still treasure pieces that we together acquired in Vancouver in the 1970's. I also will treasure memories of going to the Vancouver Symphony and other concerts with Jill and with Don.

Jill's was life was truly well- lived. I am sure Jill would be pleased with use of the J.S Woodsworth quote. Jill walked the walk with her social justice work. She will be so terribly missed by so many.

Joan Wenman and Doug McPherson

— **Joan Wenman**

Very sorry to hear of passing of long term friend and colleague Jill. I hope days ahead are warmed with good memories of days and years with her. Gordon

— **Gordon Rudolph**

Thank you Don for sharing such a wonderful remembrance of Jill, and for managing with love these last difficult years. Jill has been a sunny part of our co-op and the False Creek neighbourhood since I can remember - and we're talking decades! We will miss her.

— **Val Embree**

I didn't know Jill but, reading her obituary, I find we had a great deal in common and I'm sorry I wasn't fortunate enough to have met her in person. I'm going to keep, and use, that grace and will make a donation to the SPCA in her honour! I'm so sorry for your loss - the world has lost one of the good ones. :-(Debbie

— **Debbie Miyashita**

Jill's life and accomplishments amaze me, as do yours, Uncle Don. I can't imagine a couple more suited for each other, and your love for Jill shines through this eloquent passage. I hope you find comfort in your memories of this amazing woman.

— **Darren Francey**

Jill and I met more than fifty years ago at U.B.C. She was a valued friend, an esteemed colleague and a remarkable person who truly "walked the talk". My heartfelt condolences to Don, family members, friends and all whose lives she touched and enriched.

— **Allan Fletcher**

A wonderful testament to a remarkable and genuine Woman, someone who has had such a positive influence on my own life. It is truly a privilege to have been so close to someone with such love and intellect yet the sincere capacity to be very humble. It has been a herculean long haul for you Uncle Don, I hope you are able to find Peace. Love, James

— **James**

Don, you and Jill have been my model of a good relationship. Your wonderful partnership was inspiring to me. I knew Jill was an accomplished and dedicated scholar but she was even more so than I knew. I didn't know even half of her accomplishments. I will remember her with affection and respect, and will think also of your devoted care for her in these last few years.

You are in my thoughts at this difficult time.

— **Kathleen Fitzpatrick**

What a lovely tribute to a wonderful woman. She will be missed...

— **Erin J Gilchrist**

I had the very good fortune to know Jill for over forty years and what a dear friend she was. I met her through her husband, Don, with whom I did graduate studies in genetics in David Suzuki's lab at UBC in the early 70's and over the following decades we spent many memorable times together at dinners, parties, political events and musical concerts. Jill was steadfast, kind, idealistic, generous, almost to a fault as she couldn't resist giving to many worthy causes, and sweet. They generously allowed me to spend vacations with my family at their beloved cabin in Merville and Jill's wide range of interests and endeavours were obvious. I shall miss her terribly. I send my heartfelt condolences to Don and their respective families.

— **Bob Camfield**

Dear Don, please accept my condolences. I hope good memories of your beloved Jill help you to find comfort.

Warmest regards,

Mahnaz

— **Mahnaz Keramati**

I'm so sorry, Don, to hear about Jill's long struggle with this terrible disease. She is your heart and soul, and now her suffering is over. What an amazing person - I so deeply regret not having known her better than I do. My heart aches for your anguish now, and I trust you have people who love you and Jill within reach, even during these supremely disorienting times. I am sure you know you can call us any time for any reason. And when herd immunity has finally rendered this dreadful virus to the ranks of routine seasonal vaccination rotations, I look forward to a celebration of the love and compassion Jill brought with her as she walked with us on this earth.

— **Sandra Schulze**

Dear Don,

We are very sorry to hear of Jill's passing. Please accept our sincerest condolences. You and your family are in our thoughts during this difficult time.

— **The Harden Lab**

Jill was an inspiration to us. Her kind and caring nature shone through all the time. Jill always had the ability to look at and understand things in a way that made us think about others. Her sense of humour always put a smile on our faces. We are so grateful to have kept in contact with you and Jill over the years, Don. Please accept our deepest sympathies.

— **Murray Richter**

I admired Jill and Don's relationship, and their long-term commitment to social justice issues. Both worked hard on my 1991 campaign to be only the second NDP MLA for Vancouver Little-Mountain (first was 1973). They were committed democrats who expected an elected representative to communicate respectfully and to listen to activists and voters. Both were very respectful of other people involved in this social movement. I also admired how kindly Don interacted with Jill during her illness. Beth and I used to see them at the Vancouver Symphony and enjoy how much Jill continued to appreciate the music. We need more people like both of you, Don.

— Tom Perry and Beth Chambers, Vancouver

Thank you for these memories of Jill, Don. We always enjoyed Jill's friendly smile and wave hello everyday, which became a welcome and familiar staple of our life here in the co-op. How easy it is to take these things for granted! The fabric of our day to day is made up of important things like this, and the daily touch in meant that you two were OK and that the world was turning as it should. I also remember looking up and being surprised to see Jill's friendly face in places like: the Filberg Festival a number of years ago, the folk festival from time to time, and at various architecture-related events. All welcome reminders of how our interests and curiosities converged. I will miss those and our daily wave-greeting. Thank you again for the memories. Richard and Carol Evans.

— Richard and Carol Evans

When I first met Jill in the summer of 1981 I was immediately struck by how nurturing and kind she was. I soon discovered that this modest, humble person had a number of passions. The first passion was you, Don--and what a good choice she made as you two created a harmonious and meaningful life together. Then there was tea. Steeped in Jill's brown English teapot, it accompanied great conversation from local politics to music and architectural history. Meanwhile, Jill shared her love with a host of cats that she rescued from homelessness. But when I think of Jill's compassion for others, people without homes come to front of mind. I learned a lot from watching her interact with them and acknowledge their inherent dignity and humanity. As I got to know Jill, I learned bit by bit that she had an incredibly rich intellectual life. She loved to share her learning about architectural history and workers' housing. She had great stories about cataloguing famous artworks at the Vancouver Art Gallery. She also liked fun—bringing us to concerts at the Rogue and Vancouver Symphony. A visit with her had to include a trip to the Scandinavian shop and tea at The Bay! I will miss her quirky laugh and great sense of humor. But I will always feel enveloped in her love. That is the best gift from a dear friend!

— **Janet Pelley**

I was a childhood friend of Jill's. We played hide and seek, statues and built our forts of leaves in the Wades front yard. Jill was always the organizer and so much fun. What a wonderful childhood! Always knew she was a leader. To her family I express my sympathy and prayers for your peace.

Glenna Zetaruk , formerly of 46 Claremont St. In Norwood.

— **Glenna Zetaruk**

My most heartfelt condolences on the loss of your dear Jill. I know you will be comforted knowing that she had a wonderfully interesting and fulfilling life with loving family and friends and you will find peace remembering the good times you had together. Sincerest sympathy.

— **Dorothy Yada**

To Don and Jill's family:

I read with deep sadness of Jill's passing. While I have not seen Don and Jill in the past few years, I remember her with great respect and affection. I met them both through NDP campaign work about 40 years ago and joined them in many party efforts over many years. She was always supportive, good natured, and dedicated. I enjoyed her and Don's company so much over those many years. She will be missed. My sincere condolences to you Don, and to the rest of the family and to her other friends.

— **Gerry Scott**

We feel so fortunate to have gotten to know both of you these past few years. Jill was a wise and compassionate woman. I treasure the memories I have of Jill and my paths coming together on our morning walks when we first moved to the neighborhood. We talked about our families in Manitoba, her childhood in Norwood and she would tell me about some of the history of our community. You have been inspiring neighbours to both of us. Theo and I admire your engagement in social justice issues, the arts and academic contributions. We are thinking of you, Don, at this sad time.

— **Carla and Theo Elfers**

I'm deeply saddened hearing of Jill's passing. I have not seen Don and Jill in the past few years, I remember her with great respect and affection. I met them both through NDP campaign work about 40 years ago. Jill was good natured and dedicated to social justice. Don's support and care for Jill during the past number of years is a testament to their love and dedication to each other. My sincere condolences to you Don, family and friends.

— **Susan Sanderson**

Mona and I were very saddened to hear about Jill's passing. I will never forget her generous support and encouragement during our time together as graduate students. More recently, I have many wonderful memories of crossing paths with her in the neighbourhood and of the long and lively conversations that inevitably ensued. She had a way of making everyone feel special. Jill rarely talked about her many accomplishments so thank you for sharing some of the highlights with us. We're thinking of you Don. Doug Cruikshank

— **Doug Cruikshank and Mona Hamill**

Don, as a colleague and friend I remember you well and I remember Jill as one of the kindest and most considerate individuals I had ever met. I am deeply and sincerely sorry for your loss.

— **David Holm**

I will remember Jill with such fondness from the over 40 years we have known both Jill and you, Don. You have written such a loving memorial to her Don, and we send you our deepest condolences. It has been such a hard number of years as she declined, she has been in all our hearts over this time, and she has been so well cared for and loved during this time by you Don. I will always remember the insights into BC and architectural history she shared, the steadfast commitment to so many NDP campaigns she unfailingly volunteered in, and among other things the lovely times we would happen to meet at Granville Island and enjoy some personal moments. Also on behalf of my mom Ann den Hertog, we all send our love and condolences to you Don, and to all of Jill and your families.

— **Johanna den Hertog**

I was a volunteer at the day program Jill attended so I unfortunately didn't know her before she became ill. She was so lovely I am also from Winnipeg and St. Boniface and she really responded to that when I would tell her that. She was gentle and peaceful. It was wonderful and touching to read about her life and many, many accomplishments. Who she was still still shone brightly through her. Loss is so hard and loss from dementia even more so. Please know she was much loved at the centre and I mourn her passing.

— **Karen**

My heartfelt condolences on the loss of Jill, such a warm, friendly, caring person. I hope that you are comforted knowing she had a very interesting, fulfilling life and that you will find peace remembering the good times you had together. Sincerest sympathy.

— **Dorothy Yada**

Dear Don,

I still remember first meeting Jill in the late 1970s when we were both volunteering on Ron Johnson's campaign for MP in Vancouver-Center. I was immediately struck by her warmth, generosity and political passion. We kept in touch over all the years at many political events. She was always full of enthusiasm and commitment and inspired us all.

One of my last memories of Jill is of a summer evening when my partner, Penny, and I were sitting on our front porch. You and Jill were out for a walk, saw us and came up to the front porch. All four of us then had a wonderful visit.

I will miss Jill. I am sorry for your loss, Don.

Tim Louis

— **Tim Louis**

My family immigrated to Winnipeg in 1948 and my very first friend in Canada was Jill. I spent my early years playing mostly at Jill 's home and I stayed many weekends with her family. We stayed in touch and I have only wonderful memories of a very dear friend. Bendith Dduw Arnoch. God's Blessings Always.

— **Jeanette Roberts Newman**

I must have come into contact with you Don, and Jill, at some NDP function or a Thanksgiving gathering pre 2003. You two certainly were familiar faces. I became more aware of Jill as our paths would cross at the Fairview Community Branch of Vancity and we would acknowledge each other with a greeting and a few words. At another meeting I was thrilled to bits to have a recollection of mine affirmed by Jill. She said yes, an earlier rendition of the Vancouver Art Gallery had existed in the mid to late sixties on West Georgia nearer to Stanley Park. So it was not just a figment of my imagination! She knew. She had worked there. In Jill's later years she enjoyed going for walks and at our Friday night dinners she would enumerate the names of the streets that she traveled along. I always thought that it gave her great pleasure to say that she walked along 10th Avenue past Manitoba Street and Ontario Street. I don't know her whole route but it certainly was an activity that she enjoyed. Jill's gentle spirit has been and will be missed by many. Warm regards
Barbara

— **Barbara Fitch**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/wade-catherine-jill>

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