Claire Wilson (nee Medd, then Watts)

JUNE 11, 2022

Born into a large farming family in Cutknife Saskatchewan, Claire was the third youngest of nine children born to Mabel and Nathan Medd. The family split up when Claire was 8 and the younger children relocated to Moon Lake Alberta while the older siblings were sent out to work and send money back to support them on a subsistence farm. She was able to attend the University of Alberta and become a teacher and raised 4 children with her husband Phillip Watts. He was a British immigrant bricklayer, encouraged by Claire to go to university and became a doctor. Tired of Prairie winters, upon his graduation, they followed some of Claire's siblings west. The family moved to Vancouver Island and then to Burnaby where she spent most of her adult life. After Phillip died she was happily remarried to Robert Wilson of Coquitlam for over a decade.

Claire was predeceased by daughter Shelley (1986) and two husbands. She is survived by daughter Elaine (Wes), son Roger (Suzanne) and daughter Phyllis (Jim), and the apples of her eyes, grandchildren Alexis, Chris, Shanelle and Maya, as well as stepsons Doug and Greg Wilson. Claire has 3 surviving siblings, Joyce Engstrom (age 100), Shirley Burton (98), Ron (91) and dozens of nieces and nephews who she also loved dearly. Nothing was better to her than being with family and she was lucky enough to have spent 94 years living with family around her.

We in turn were blessed with her beautiful presence, vitality, joie de vivre, her loving and happy nature, and the example of her generous, friendly and kind spirit. She loved to dance and sing (in the church choir until covid); she opened her house to family, friends, foreigners and strangers alike. For a woman of her generation she traveled extensively -the UK, and Europe in her 20s, 50s and 70s; China, Australia (twice), Fiji, Hawaii, many US states east, west, and south, Canada from east to west--and family vacations to Europe, Jamaica, Mexico, Alaska cruise, a week in the Muskokas, as well as a river cruise in Russia all were highlights of the last 15 years. Remaining physically active, energetic and sociable until near the end, she always wanted to contribute or be helpful in whatever way she could. Even donating her body to UBC for medical science, and 40 years of giving blood, shows the kind of person she was.

We are so grateful Phyllis and Jim could look after our mother for the last decade as she slowly became more dependent. That gave her a great quality of life and was a great gift to her and the rest of the family.

She had a full life, well lived, and her presence will live on in us.

A celebration of life is planned for Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 1 pm, at the Jubilee United Church, 7591 Gray Ave, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 3Z4.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in Claire’s memory to one of her favorite causes--University Women's Club scholarships, Cancer, a local library, the United Church, or to one of your own.

Messages of Condolence

44 years of love, laughter, family, friends, adventure, family dinners, good conversation and, again, more love.

And this is just me.

How you touched those around you. □ □ □

— Curtis Anshelm

We will certainly miss Claire's sunny nature at the family reunion this summer at the beach! Always an encouraging word to everyone she spoke to. Such a smile. What a life! Love from John and Sara

— Sara Medd

What a full life, so much I didn't know about her from the write up. Her passing has pierced my heart. The end of an era.

— Janice Turriff

I loved sharing adventures with Claire when she visited Australia, and when I visited Vancouver. She was a delightful and gracious lady.

— Diane Davies

I have so many good memories of you mom when she would come and visit in Comox. I remember her taking me skiing at the Forbidden plateau. She bought two ski lift tickets and we had to share them. I know it was Darrell and I and I think Roger and Phylis. Your mom took me to my first grown up restaurant, the Old Spaghetti Factory. You talked about how your mom opened her doors to strangers. One time I was flying back from Ontario and the plane landed in Vancouver but couldn't leave because of the fog and not only did your mom take me in, she also took my seat passenger in, a total stranger. There are not enough words for me to describe what you meant to me and my mother. This wonderful women will be missed but she has always been in my heart. My condolences to all you.

— Kelly Kibblewhite

I was blessed with having the opportunity to drive Claire to Church on Sundays as well as Choir practice for a few years until the Covid pandemic ended meeting in person.
Claire was special. Her love and concern for everyone was heart warming and she never complained about anything. Her sense of humour was remarkable even when her memory
began to fade.
Claire was always a joy to be with and she will be greatly missed
Barry Morley

— Barry Morley

in December 2019 Jeanette Burton, my friend, drove us to Burnaby, where I was so glad to meet Madame Wilson and other family members. We all had diner at a Chinese restaurant, (do not remember the name) and then we visited the home where Madame Wilson was residing at the time. I had happy conversations and even one dance with Madame. She was a cheerful and positive person. I am very glad that I was in her presence. A fine example of a positive influence on society. Thank-you

— Micheline de Seminet

I have many happy memories of my dear old friend Claire. We were in SBUC choir together for many years, and also went to many dances together. Lots of happy meals with Claire both in her Burnaby home, and in Arizona when she and Bob visited me, and then in her Coquitlam home.
Hopefully, I will be able to attend her Memorial Service in August.

— Connie-Lou Bickford

Special memory of Claire,
Starting in the mid-90’s, my 3 cousins Lyndsay Hunley, Chris Frederickson & Kathie Reid (sisters) traveled from Vancouver Island with their craft wares in tow for the 3-day Coquitlam Christmas Fair. I would drive up from my place in Seattle, us 4 would all stay at Elaine’s house…. In short order we called is ‘The cousins’ weekend’. We fell into a pattern on Sunday of this weekend. Claire and her husband Bob hosted all of us for breakfast at their house before the girls had to be back at the fair. Bob made the pancakes; Claire did the rest. It became quite a house full of people. Phyllis, Jim and the girls came along with Bob’s 2 sons. In later years Claire invited her friend, Irene to join us. After Claire moved in with Phyllis & Jim, we all continued the breakfast but went to a Chinese Dim Sum restaurant.
In all these years Claire was witted, kind, funny, curious (she would try any food). She always participated in the conversations going around the table. In short, my ‘ant’ Claire was a gracious lady. I will miss her…

Jeanette Burton

— Jeanette Burton

I met Claire when I became friends with Shelley after graduating from high school. Shelley & I were keen to learn French, so we often had social gatherings with students visiting from France or other countries in Europe. A few of these were held at the Burnaby home. Claire was always an engaging and welcoming host. Open and warm-hearted, with a twinkle in her eye is how I remember her.
Sincere condolences

— Cathy Francescutto

For anyone who would like to watch the remembrance service it is on YouTube at the link below.
https://youtu.be/qQx7uFzC4b8

— Elaine Watts

Dear, dear Claire, you indeed did open your lovely & welcoming home to many. I and my UBC student boyfriend at the time, Harold Teichgraef, shared (separate, hehe) rooms as students in your Burnaby home in the mid-80's.

What a truly lovely, gracious, interested & curious (thus intelligent) "landlady" you were. Kind with joie de vivre & definitely that sweet twinkle in your eye. Thank you for everything.

This world is missing your warmth.

With love & respect, Cindi.

— Cindi Kutrieb