Yvonne "Jacqueline" Witt



DECEMBER 16, 2016

Jacqui (born Mei Seung Sue) passed away peacefully on December 16, 2016 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. She was pre-deceased by her father Chue Lam Sue, survived by her mother Wai Hing Sue, husband Paul, sons, Matthew (Kortney), Jonathan (Ali), and Benjamin (Elizabeth), siblings (Tong, Jerry, Shirley Lau, Patrick, and Andrew), and grandchildren (Carter, Tessa, Piper, Juliet, Charlotte, Juniper).

Jacqui was born in British Guiana (now Guyana) but before emigrating from Guyana to Canada as a teenager, she lived for a time with her paternal grandparents in Hong Kong, along with her brother Andrew and cousins Joan and Diane. She and her sister Shirley were sent to live in Toronto (North York) when Shirley started university and Jacqui was still in high school. At the time, there were no other Asians at York Mills Collegiate so it was quite a culture shock for her, not to mention experiencing Canadian winters for the first time.

Jacqui enrolled in the Physio and Occupational Therapy program at the University of Toronto in 1969. She was introduced to her husband Paul by her neighbour and friend from high school, Jeff Bloom, who was Paul's roommate at U of T. Jacqui and Paul started dating in 1970 and, once they both had graduated from U of T, married in the summer of 1974. As a couple, they lived for a short time in Toronto and then moved to Ottawa where Jacqui met and worked with Judy Pennington,

who would become one of her nearest and dearest friends. They returned to Toronto when Paul entered the graduate program at U of T, and then moved to Campbell River BC. Matthew and Jonathan were both born in Campbell River but before Benjamin arrived, the family relocated to Tsawwassen BC, which has been the family's hometown ever since.

Once children started to arrive, Jacqui did not return to practise physiotherapy but took on the responsibilities of managing Paul's orthodontic practice and raising her boys. However, her physio training proved invaluable raising three active boys. She volunteered for many organizations, but especially enjoyed the ones in which her boys were involved. She was a familiar face on the soccer and grass-hockey pitches, at the Boundary Bay Blue Backs Swim Club, on the ski hills at freestyle competitions, at South Park Elementary, South Delta Secondary, and Southridge Secondary Schools. She made many friends through all of her volunteering in Tsawwassen, Ladner, and Whistler. She became a surrogate mother to many of her boys' friends as the doors to the family homes (Tsawwassen and Whistler) were always open to them, and of course she had plenty of food to feed them. There was always room for one more at the dinner table and a place to stay if needed.

Once all of her sons had graduated from university, Jacqui set her sights on gardening, refining her cooking, and travelling. Unfortunately, in the year that this was all to happen, breast cancer struck the first time. Jacqui had been going for mammograms for many years and the tests provided false negatives. She eventually self-identified a lump, but by then the cancer was already stage 3. She had been told by the radiologists doing the mammograms over the years that she had dense breast tissue, a circumstance which could interfere with possible detection of cancer. Jacqui made it her mission to tell others about this fact in the hope that they would ask their physicians about having diagnostic testing in addition to the mammograms which might improve the outcomes for them.

Jacqui tolerated the mastectomies, the chemo-therapy, the radiation therapy, the lymph-edema, the peripheral neuropathy, the steroid related body changes, all without complaint. She remained dignified and positive throughout. The only wishes that she expressed to her oncologist, Dr Diego Villa, were that she not die before having a sports car, and taking trips to New Zealand and Tuscany.

During the five years since her first diagnosis of cancer, Jacqui did get the sports car (sort of…) and did squeeze in some trips: Mexico, Phoenix, Palm Desert (to see her favourite tennis player, Roger Federer), France, Denmark, and lastly, New Zealand. The New Zealand trip was especially important to her as she was anxious to visit with her Auntie Mary (and her family) and her Uncle George (and his family) as they had been so very kind to her during her time in Hong Kong. Jacqui had a wonderful time on that trip but almost as soon as she returned to Tsawwassen in March of 2016, she began to have the pain that was the first sign the cancer had returned.

Jacqui was determined to get to Tuscany and so she again fought through the pain, the chemo, the physical tiredness and weakness, the nausea, and a near-death brush with pneumonia. She seemed to be getting some borrowed time when almost all symptoms subsided near the end of September 2016. However, on Canadian Thanksgiving weekend she was told that, despite the improved symptoms, the tumours were growing again. A new chemo regimen was started but by early November, the tumours were continuing to grow and the heart-breaking decision was made to stop all cancer treatments. Once again, Jacqui faced all of this without complaint. She realized that she had gained some borrowed time which allowed her to see her newest grand-daughter, Juniper, who was born in the summer of 2016 in Ontario. An early Christmas celebration was held in November at which all of the boys and their families gathered.

Jacqui had several admissions to hospital during her battle for life but mostly, as was her wish, she was cared for at her home where she could look at her garden and visit with friends. In December, it was no longer possible for her to remain at home and she was moved to the Irene Thomas Hospice in Ladner. On Friday morning, December 16, Paul left her room for 10 minutes, and told her not to go anywhere until he came back. However, when he returned, she had already taken her last breath. To the end, Jacqui did not want to burden anyone, or as some would say, she always did have a mind of her own.

Jacqui cherished the many close relationships she was blessed to have had over her 66 years, which is what made her life truly worth living. She always worked to help others, to make them feel welcome, and to ensure that no one went hungry. As she told her family near the end, “I have no regrets” although she never did get that trip to Tuscany…

Jacqui would very much like to have thanked her oncologist, Dr Diego Villa, her family physician, Dr Collen Lee (who went above and beyond in caring for Jacqui), and all of the wonderful staff involved with her treatments and care provided at Surrey Memorial Hospital, BC Cancer Agency in Vancouver (especially Lib Cooper), in her home, and at Irene Thomas Hospice. She was deeply touched by the tremendous support throughout her ordeal from her family (especially Andrew and Min, Patrick and Rosaline) and her many friends (especially Dr Ken Poskitt and David and Susan Stitt).

Jacqui’s one fear in dying was that she would soon be forgotten, but the outpouring of love from so many assured her that this would not be the case. She will be sorely missed. As one friend commented, “It was always a privilege to be in her company, she was a wonderful person. Whenever I saw Jacqui I left feeling better than when I arrived”. Such was Jacqui’s affect on many. Most did not know Jacqui’s Chinese name, Mei Seung. Translated, this means Beautiful Angel. We

have lost our angel.

To honour Jacqui's life, generous spirit, and passion for the culinary arts, family and friends have established the **“Yvonne Jacqueline Witt Culinary Arts Award”** at Vancouver Community College. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to this award at www.vcc.ca/makeagift, or alternatively, to the Delta Hospice Society www.deltahospice.org. A celebration of Jacqui’s life will be held at a later date.

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

Messages of Condolence

The main thing I remember about Jacqui is that she always seemed to be smiling or laughing.

— Wayne Peace

Her laugh and warmth are surrounding us,
Her love illuminates our life path,
Her courage accompanies our life journey,
Even in her absence!
It has been a blessing for all,
To have been touched by her!

A friendship was once formed,
Will transcend time, place , life and death .

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— ming

I wasn't a small town person but Jacqui made my years in Campbell River. I was thrilled when you moved to the Lower Mainland and until our kids reached school age, we had many visits together. As she followed her three sons and I followed mine, we rarely met except for occasional soccer games and sightings on FB but as many have attested, Jacqui was a person that made you feel good and you can never forget her. I'm so sorry for your loss.

— Karen Cooke

My life was blessed when I met Jacqui and I treasure the times we had together - all the things
she did for me and the children, the care and loving when I had my stroke and just being the
wonderful friend that she always was! I shall never forget her and feel privileged to have shared
some time with her -- I shall never forget her!!

— Claire Ryce

Hi Paul Matthew, Jonathan, and Benjamin:

We can understand very well the difficult time you are going through at this moment. Our family had the same experience seventeen years ago. She will not be forgotten even though she is not around, but her spirit is always with you. We always have Lawrence in our mind in our daily life.
May God bless and comfort your all. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Choy

— Sylvia Choy

My deepest sympathy Paul. Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin and their families.
It's been a privilege and honour knowing Jacqui [your mom]
She was one of those rare people that one feels you have known for a lifetime.
I will dearly miss our chats and giggles.
You will be fondly remembered and missed Jacqui.
Sue.

— Sue Cherkas

Dear Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin and families: What a beautiful summary of Jacqui's life and the pictures speak a thousand words proving what a wonderful friend, wife, mother and grandmother she was. My sincere condolensces to everyone. Together as a family you will see each other through these difficult times with your love and support. Paul and Jacqui gave me their love and support on more than one occasion and I am so grateful for that! So now I am letting you know that I am here for you if you need anything! My thoughts and prayers are with you....
Sincerely, Dawnjhm

— Dawn Ellis

Paul & family,

Words cannot even begin to express our sorrow.
Please remember that you are not alone. we are always here for you
Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same. May your memories give you peace and comfort. Lad & Eva

— Lad & Eva Dolejsi

When I first met Jacqui, I was a young 19 year old girl fresh out of college. She made you feel comfortable and always had a smile on her face.When relocating the office and Family to Tsawwassen, she opened her home to me.That was the type of person she was, very welcoming. Over the years I enjoyed my visits with Paul and Jacqui. My thoughts and prayers go out to you Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin, and your Families.

— Michele Dennett

We are shocked and saddened to hear of Jacqui's passing in today's paper. I will never forget, and always treasure her support as I taught the boys in my first years of teaching at South Park Elementary. Jacqui was an incredibly optimistic, kind and generous person. She always insisted that I take my family to Whistler and stay at their place up there. Years later, when I bumped into her at Thrifty's and my own kids were teenagers, she still repeated the insistence that we do this, so we did, and we had a fantastic week exploring the Witt's winter backyard. She and Paul raised three wonderful sons and that speaks volumes to the kind of mother she was. Our deepest condolences go out to Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin and their families. Jacqui really was a "Beautiful Angel."

— James Brown and family

Paul and family
We are heartbroken for your loss. Please accept out most sincere sympathy. Whenever we saw Jaqui she was always smiling. What a great legacy.

— Joan and Mike Knigt

Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin and their families We are so sorry to hear of the passing of Jacqui She was a beautiful and special person She will always be remembered and she will live on in your memories She left a beautiful family who will carry on for her. Our thoughts are with you at this tough time She will fly free

— Nancy and Ken Wilson

Dear Paul, Matthew, Jon and Ben,
What a terribly sad time this is for you and your families - we're so very sorry.
We'll always remember Jacqui for her spunkiness and laughter - but equally so, for her kindness and caring ways...
There are no words, Jacqui, to tell you how much you'll be missed. You will never be forgotten!
Thinking of you all, Katie and Don

— Katie and Don Ekroth

Paul, Matthew, Jonathan and Benjamin,
Our family was deeply saddened by this news. Our days together at the Blackcomb Freestyle club are top of mind whenever I enter the Glacier Lodge and look to the corner where some could usually be found.
I feel privileged to have known Jacqui, you are in our hearts and prayers.

Carol Kerfoot

— Carol Kerfoot

Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin - I am very sorry to hear of Jacqui's passing. I hope that you take comfort in knowing that the memory of Jacqui will live on in so many people. I always enjoyed catching up with her when we'd run into each other out on Delta Street or at community events. She was always so kind and so proud of all of you. Take care.

— Lindy Mathesius

Dear Paul and family,
Too early to have lost Jacque!
Our very sincere condolences.

Our paths crossed over the years in Tsawwassen,
And car pools.

Fond memories of a vibrant and gentle soul
Kate Tregaskes & Roger Smith
Xxxx

— Kathleen Tregaskes

We are so saddened to learn of Jacqui's passing. Please accept our sincere condolences. She was a wonderful neighbour and a lovely, gracious woman. She was always so positive and fun to be around - a force of nature! She will NOT be forgotten. I know that Jacqui was very proud of her family and that her beautiful spirit will live on through you all.

— Shelby and Harvey Delaney

It was with great sadness that we heard of Jaqui's passing. She was always a bright star and one that truly gave of herself to others. To have lived without regrets is probably one of life's greatest achievements and not attained by many. She will be missed.

— Ron Davidson

Paul, Matthew, Jonathan, & Benjamin - we adults all inevitably go through transitions. Knowing Jacqui makes this more difficult, as her infectious laughter and personality will always be remembered, yet knowing the great people she loved and nurtured leaves us with a tangible reminder of her forever.

— Nora & Burt Goldstein

Al and I were shocked to hear of Jacqui's passing. We didn't know she had been sick. I knew I hadn't bumped in to her for a long time and now I know why. What can I say. What a great person she was, always so positive and optimistic with that bouncing shining hair and flashing eyes. After chatting with Jacquie, I always felt uplifted no matter my mood. Paul this community will dearly miss her. We express our sincerest condolances to you and your family. Jacqui will never be forgotten!!!

— Pam McKinnon

Jacqui will always be remembered as a kind lady and a dear friend.. she was taken far to early.. condolences to Paul and the family

— Patty Scrase

Paul, Matt, Jon, and Ben. We were sadden to hear of Jacqui's passing and we are so sorry for your loss. Jacqui was always smiling and laughing whenever we run into her. One of my favourite (recent) memories of Jacqui was seeing her at Wiebe's wedding as Jon's date. Jacqui was so excited to be there with all of the Tsawwassen boys that she had a part in raising. I hope all of you are well and take comfort in knowing that Jacqui lived a good life and touched to many other lives along the way. Take Care.

— Jonathan and Amanda Lim

Paul, Matthew, Jonathan and Benjamin,
We are saddened about the news of Jacqui. Remembrances of soccer and field hockey games, get togethers and a most wonderful meal downtown with lots of friends that Jacqui organized and best of all, ordered all the dishes which were a highlight for us. Her family was her life and she will never be forgotten.

— Cheryl and Dick Ferguson

Dear Paul and family,
We are so sorry to learn of Jacqui's passing.Please accept our heartfelt condolences.
Greg and Brenda Huculak
Tsawwassen

— Brenda L. Huculak

Such sad news. Our condolences to all her family. Jacqui was my neighbour in Tsawwassen for many years and was always so full of energy and enthusiasm for whatever task she was doing. She worked tirelessly for her boys and always found time for charity work. We will always remember her generosity, warmth and good humour, as will all those who had the pleasure of knowing her.

— Jen and Alan Vlemmiks

What if the time we are given to spend here might be measured in who you spend it with. ? It is worth it !! We hope we can say that about everyone we are privileged to meet.

To receive time from Jacqui was our gift of a life time.
Each of our family have received that gift individually from Jacqui.
Time .....a caring gift that will never end .

In sharing life's journey we need to be able to trust, when someone says they will be there or even better they will be there for you.
Our family experience is one of knowing we can trust the Witt family to be there.
Paul, your thoughtful e. mails kept us clearly a part of your journey with Jacqui.It is our time to be there for you in prayer and to meet needs as we might become aware of them.
As we read the sincere appreciations in this posting, we feel part of many who have been in like , cared for by Jacqui.
The apples did not fall far from the tree.
Paul , be awed that the team of you and Jacqui are continuing your loving example through Matt, Jon , and Ben.

Thank you Jacqui, for forever time and trust,
Grateful,
The Gillespie family.

— Laurie Geraldine, Rob and Andrea.

Paul and family, Jackie and I are so sorry to hear of Jacqui. Please accept our deepest sympathy.

— Michael Wainwright

Dear Paul, Matthew, Benjamin and Jonathan and other family.
On behalf of Adrian and myself, please accept our sincerest sympathies on the passing of Jacqui. I got to know Jacqui in the school days at South Park and at the local high school when our children were getting educated. Jacqui was a caring and committed mom and I enjoyed getting to know her. Over the last few years, whenever I saw her in the local town center she would stop and speak to me, always asking how my family was doing. She always had a warm smile for me--a smile I will miss very much.

She was a great lady who loved her family dearly and who, from what I hear, bore her time of suffering with dignity.

She will be missed.

— Jean and Adrian Wightman

Such sad news. Jacqui was always such a joy to speak to, always encouraging, and warm, and positive. Jacqui was someone I just always looked forward to seeing....her kind smile . She just had a way of making me feel special. You will be missed Jacqui by everyone who had the luck to know you.

— cathryn jenkins

Paul and family:
The way that Jacqui touched all hearts, the smiles and laughter she created will live on forever. Heaven has gained an angel.
Leiana & Craig

— Leiana & Craig Wilson

Dear Paul

I just heard today from a patient of Jacqui's passing. I am so sorry for your loss. I did not have the pleasure of knowing her, but what a wonderful story you have shared in her obit. Please accept our deepest sympathy.

— Garry Lunn

Sending our heartfelt sympathy to you Paul and your family. May your memories of Jacqui bring you comfort at this difficult time. Keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.

— Dave & Ingrid Bast

Dear Paul, Matthew, Jonathan & Benjamin
How your hearts must be breaking. Jacqui was truly a special soul, always so full of life & energy. We will always remember Jacqui & her wonderful family at all the freestyle events that the Blackcomb club hosted & participated in. Jacqui was a caring person who will be missed by so many. Our thoughts & prayers are with you all at this very sad time.

— Pat & Greg Smith

Thank you for sharing the meaning of Jacqui's Chinese name. Jacqui was a Beautiful Angel and friend to so many here on earth! Very lucky to have known her!
Hugs to you all!

— Jane Manning

Yes a "Beautiful Angel" indeed. Jacqui was always a bright light with energy, a ready smile, a good story, great food, and lots of humour. No matter where we met over the past 25 years - in a friends home, on our street, in our elementary school, in the Ortho office, at the Ladner market or some random place, Jacqui always gave the gift of "time" and made that time feel special and full. She will be missed by so many. Paul, our hearts and prayers are with you, Matthew, Jonathan, Benjamin and their beautiful families.

— Erin and Rick Switzer

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