

IN MEMORIAM

Evelyn Mitchell

June 24, 1933 - October 13, 2019

Mum could paddle a canoe like a pro and sit a horse like she was born to it. Because she was. She was born in rural Northern Ontario in 1933. Can you picture her log rolling, snowshoeing or riding a dog sled to school? She split firewood, went fishing and helped raise chickens during the Depression. And here it was that she began her training in natural healing beside her Norwegian grandmother.

Mum's father Eldon Wright was a military policeman so the family which included sisters Jackie and Millie and brother Ted followed him to Winnipeg during the war and then to Calgary. Mum worked at Zellers to earn the money to pay for her high school books and was planning to follow Jackie into nursing school when she met Doug who had been posted to Calgary with the RCAF. She was 18 when they married and moved to Ottawa. So began a marriage of 68 years through which she represented Canada as a military wife in four countries embracing the opportunities to learn languages, customs and to broaden the education and experiences of her three daughters. All that and they were both formidable badminton champions.

Terry was born in Ottawa, Caron in Edmonton and Kari in Germany through very difficult pregnancies. The hand of God surely rested on her in those times as she received exceptional care when she needed it most. To know my mother at all is to know that she would spend the rest of her life raising independent, intelligent, educated women who would be free to pursue their dreams in life understanding that they were to "do no harm but take no crap". This extended to her beloved granddaughters Rita and Josie and to her great granddaughter Rosalie. Even in her last days she took care to let you know that the baby is Rosalie *Evelyn*. Let's be clear.

"If you can read, you can do anything." In keeping with her passion for learning mum learned basket weaving and copper tooling, ceramics, crochet and upholstery. She was also able to complete the stylist syllabus at Mario's School of Beauty in half the time because of her previous (self-taught) experience. Much of it was to make for her family the things she could not afford to buy. She did 'knittin' for Britain' during the war and didn't put the needles down until she fell a few short weeks ago. And still she asked for wool. Red wool. She made two quilts completely by hand, one each for her grandchildren. She was a brilliant seamstress as well. I remember dad carrying me through the kitchen to the potty with his hand over my eyes because mum was sewing Barbie clothes for me for Christmas. And she was a baker like no other. Josie is remarkably like her grandmother in her ability to make Nanny's bread and pie crust. Also in her resilience and determination to follow her heart.

I remember receiving flat ginger ale by the teaspoon when my tummy was upset. Licking Friar's Balsam and sugar off a spoon for a sore throat. Bread poultices to draw out infection. Vicks, eucalyptus and Friar's Balsam simmering on the stove when there was a cold in the house. For our mother the gift of healing was innate. Her calling. It was always there and it manifested itself in

different ways throughout her life. Rita is an extraordinary caregiver with her grandmother's heart. Although maybe not her stomach.

We were posted to Halifax in the early 1970s. Just in time for my mother to help care for her father-in-law. In return for borrowing their equipment, mum offered her time to Red Cross to drive patients to treatments and appointments. Only the service didn't extend to Dartmouth where we lived. As this was unacceptable to mum, she received permission to establish Red Cross transportation for Dartmouth out of our home. She marshalled a small contingent of volunteer drivers who borrowed our car or used their own. Eventually she secured the support of the Dartmouth Golden Ks (Kiwanis) who generously donated a vehicle and several more drivers. The service continued from our home until my parents retired.

Therapeutic Touch was a post-retirement vocation for my mother. Imagine that. An extension of a lifetime of compassion and healing she was adamant that traditional medicine was only one component -a tiny one- of the treatment of illness and pain. The next thirty years she dedicated to reading about, studying, promoting, teaching and practicing therapeutic touch.

She would be the last to believe she left a legacy. Yet the number of lives changed and pain relieved is legion. She believed that the gift and the knowledge should be passed on with no expectation of return. To that end her family would like to request that in lieu of flowers you consider supporting the work she loved through a donation to the Kensington TT Practice Group c/o G. Cooper 3266 St. Mary's Road, Route 224 St Ann's PE.

Finally: remember who you are and act accordingly.

Evelyn was a former member of Dartmouth Volksmarch Club