



REMEMBERING
Catherine May Abma

May 1, 1940 - April 18, 2020



May passed on to her eternal home on April 18, just shy of her 80th birthday, due to respiratory complications. Beloved sister of Rose Bee (Jim); dedicated mother to Murray Abma (Carol), Marilyn Loewen (Stan) and Jennifer Abma (Kyle), mother-in-law to Debbie (Les); and doting grandmother to Rachel, Rebekah, Andrew, Nathan, Malcolm and Callum; Kyra, Kaylea; Abby and Liam. She peacefully joins her late husband, Hans Abma, and parents, William Albert and Catherine Turley.

May was a passionate person with strong convictions and a deep desire to help others. She was born and raised in Sarnia, ON and followed her career path by completing her nursing degree at Sarnia General Hospital. At age 21, her independent spirit took her for three years to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago where she studied ministry/mission work and continued nursing at the local hospital.

Hans and May married in the summer of 1964 and together soon began to serve in church communities in the Sarnia area. This was followed by a move to Sault Ste. Marie in 1973 for 10 years at Plummer Memorial Hospital and Bethany Baptist Church. During these years, she raised her children to appreciate music, athletics and invest in a meaningful relationship with God: enrolling us in Royal Conservatory piano/singing competitions, playing "Name that Classical Tune" at the dinner table, and ensuring that we all embraced athletics with early tennis and swim lessons. The next chapter took the family to Cambridge ON, serving at Forward Baptist Church, and nursing at Cambridge Memorial Hospital while completing an undergrad in Arts and attending Teachers College at Brock University.

In 1992, the first grandchild arrived, so she and Hans packed up and moved to Abbotsford B.C. and began serving at Northview Community Church. During this stage in her life, she continued her nursing career at MSA Hospital in the Paeds/Maternity Wards, which brought her great joy. In her spare time, she could be found at the MSA Tennis Club on weekday mornings or visiting friends, gardening, going for walks, biking, or sharing special moments with her grandchildren. She cherished her time with them, and dedicated herself to this role, taking them swimming or biking, picking them up from school, playing Scrabble, having girls high tea, role playing "hospital", reading bedtime bible stories and singing songs. Favourite treats included her famous blueberry pancakes, strawberry swirl ice cream, backyard blue concord grapes and the stash of peppermints that could always be found in her purse. If she wasn't working, her grandma status was "Available." During these years she also looked for opportunities to help those in need, opening up her home, and her dinner table-sharing her baking, especially her sour cream apple pies.

Mom's presence was always a warm, open invitation. Both her positive disposition and attitude enabled her to journey life's curveballs with grace. Her innate caring spirit prompted her to notice and respond to those around her with a smile, gentle touch, or kind word of encouragement. Despite the challenge of dementia, she maintained a sense of humour and an ability to surprise us with a one-liner that would evoke hearty laughter. Her flexible nature lent itself to be present in the moment and share joy in the little things. A meaningful card re-read got extra miles and could stir equal emotion and meaning each time; and lyrics from old tunes could be teased out of her with joyful singing, bringing her peace. Most importantly, her eyes still sparkled in the presence of her grandchildren. Mom's faith in Jesus was the foundation on which she lived her life. She persevered to the end and now her anticipated hope is her reality.

The family is deeply grateful for the love and support of her "other daughter", Ellen Casali, who journeyed with Mom and Dad for many years. Thank you to Sara Harms for her faithful support and to the care team at Tabor Home for their appreciation of mom and their kindness and attention to her needs.

Due to current circumstances, we will postpone a memorial service, so in the meantime to honour May, listen to Chopin, play a round of Scrabble or share a home-baked pie with loved ones.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Gideons.

