REMEMBERING

Johanna Josephina Maria Nieuwkerk

January 12, 1928 - February 28, 2019

Johanna (Joanne) Josephina Maria Nieuwkerk (nee Koenders, then de Booy) passed away peacefully on Thursday, February 28, 2019 at Haro Park Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada at the age of ninety-one. She was a happy soul and warmly embraced all those she met. Johanna was born in Ouderkerk a/d Amstel (near Amsterdam) in the Netherlands, the third of six children to Dirkje Wijnands and Jan Koenders. Her father worked for a moving company. She survived the war years occasionally asking the farmers for food with her sisters and, later, boarded out to a farm family near Deventer to survive the Hunger Winter (1944-45). The Canadian Military swept through the area while they liberated the country from Nazi occupation. The Canadians were her heros! Johanna worked as an office clerk after high school. She met her first husband Jacobus (Jack) de Booy during the post-war celebrations in Amsterdam. They married in 1949. They settled in Diemen on the outskirts of Amsterdam. Sons Larry, Jeff, and Marcel were born in succession and, in 1955, the family emigrated to Canada, settling in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Their daughter, Pearl, was born there. Johanna took on part-time jobs to help with the family finances and, after the children were old enough, worked full-time. She and her husband volunteered with the Catholic Family Movement. She also volunteered visiting seniors through the Age and Opportunity Centre in Winnipeg in the 1970's, receiving the Friendly Visitor Award.

Johanna and Jacobus separated in 1978 and, later, divorced. She was active in the Dutch Club in Winnipeg and participated in many Folkloramas at the Dutch Pavilion. Through mutual friends she was introduced to her second husband-to-be Marinus (Rien) Nieuwkerk, a widower who had also immigrated to Manitoba from the Netherlands. After a whirlwind romance and a trip to Beautiful BC for Expo 86, they moved to the coast and made their home in Abbotsford, BC. Johanna and Marinus enjoyed many happy years together in Abbotsford, having gotten away from the

Prairie winters and summer mosquitos! The Abbotsford area reminded them both of their origins in the Netherlands, with tulip fields and diary farms. There were many other “Dutchies” in their strata complex and church, and in the general Abbotsford area. Joanne and Rien made several trips back to the Netherlands to visit family and friends and, most years, drove to Alberta and Manitoba to visit family and friends there. Marinus passed away in 2010. Johanna stayed on in Abbotsford, keeping herself busy with singing in the church choir and playing cards (Klaverjassen and Rummoli). She loved singing all her life and could still sing a multitude of the old Dutch songs she learned as a child. She loved to dress up for Halloween and, for several years, went door-to-door in her strata complex handing out chocolate and soliciting donations for the BC Children’s Hospital. She was always up for a good time and loved to laugh! When Johanna’s health started to fail, she moved into residential care in Vancouver to be near her son, Marcel. He was with her when she peacefully passed away. Johanna is survived by her sister Leonie Koenders in Amsterdam, nieces and nephews and their families in Europe; her children Jeff (Chris) of Winnipeg MB, Marcel of Vancouver BC, and Pearl (Bill) Franz of Red Deer AB; her daughter-in-law Valerie (Larry) Debooy of Libau MB; her granddaughters Erin Debooy (Jay Grobb) of Brandon MB, Jane (Eric) Mueller of Red Deer AB, and Anna Franz (Dallas Dzuba) of Springbrook AB; and great-grandchildren Silas and Elise Mueller of Red Deer AB; Marinus’s son Bastiaan Nieuwkerk; grandchildren Ryan (Carleen) Still and Kenton Still of Manitoba, great-grandson, Benjamin; and her (Johanna’s) brother-in-law and sister-in-laws. Joanne was predeceased by her son Larry Debooy, by four of her other siblings, by her second husband, Marinus, and her first husband, Jacobus. Johanna and Jacobus reconciled several years before his death. Celebration of Life will be held at Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church, 1161 Broughton Street, Vancouver BC V6G 2B3 at 1:00 p.m. Monday, March 11, 2019. The family wishes to thank the caregivers at Haro Park and Dr. Harris and Dr. Yung at St. Paul’s Hospital for their care and compassion. In lieu of flowers, if friends so desire, Johanna’s favourite charity was Covenant House Vancouver (Opening Doors for Homeless Youth).