



REMEMBERING
Mary Dirksen

October 5, 1928 - May 13, 2022



Mary was born in Lethbridge, Alberta, October 5, 1928 to George and Helen Barg, the 5th of ten children. She was raised in Coaldale, as a hardworking farm girl who loved to ride horses. Her family was extremely poor, and as a result, she had

to quit school in Grade 8 in order to help support the family. At the age of 19, she and her older sister Tina made the bold decision to move to Kelowna where they stayed with their married sister Margaret and worked in the fruit cannery. Both

sisters attended the young adult's group in one of the local churches, and there they each met the man of their dreams. Mary Barg and Peter Decker began dating and they were soon married in Coaldale on August 28, 1949. A year later their first child was born, a son, William Donald. As work was very scarce in Kelowna, they moved to Terrace where they started off living in a

grainery with few amenities, not even a fridge. Happily, they were able eventually to move into a small house. We're guessing that the highlight of their time there was the birth of their first daughter, Janet Marie. Two years later they moved back to Kelowna where they remained for the next 35 years. Two more daughters were born there; Christine Dianne in 1956 and Sharon Margaret in 1963. Throughout her life, Mom was a model of what it means to persevere and work hard. She was an exceptionally busy woman during the childrearing years. There was, of course, seeing to all of our needs, cooking, cleaning, sewing our clothes,

bakingour very large freezer was always packed with every kind of delicious baked good, along with borscht, frozen vegetables from our very large garden, and so on. Living in fruit country, summers were even busier with canning, preserving, or

juicing every fruit grown in the Okanagan. Some summers and falls she worked in the cannery or the packing house to try to help ends meet, or to buy some little

extras that we couldn't otherwise afford. Mom was always a faithful worker in the church. Along with being an active member of the Helping Hand Club, she taught Sunday School for a few years, and later became chairman of the Pioneer Girls committee as well as serving as a Guide. Sundays she loved having different families over for Faspa, and when needed, would host missionaries and visiting speakers. With an almost empty nest and the days of the packing house behind her, Mom began her time of service with MCC. She helped to start and manage the store in Kelowna, and in later years, did the same in Surrey. As a volunteer, she created hundreds of flower arrangements and Christmas centre pieces which sold out

almost as soon as they hit the shelves. With Dad's health deteriorating, and mom needing the support of family in caring for him, the two moved to Surrey in November 1989 and then in 1991, moved to Langley to live in Bill and Lissa's brand new ground level suite. In 1993 Dad passed away. Three years later Mom married Jake Dirksen, a widower she had gotten to know while working at the Surrey MCC store. Living in Abbotsford, they had many good years together, travelling, cruising, entertaining the "old people" in various care homes with their music, as well as volunteering with Gleaners and MCC. When Jake's health began to suffer, they moved to Langley and back into Bill and Lissa's suite. Jake passed away in 2012 and mom became a widow once again. From then on, dementia began to take over, and in 2014, Mom moved into Brookside Lodge where she lived for the rest of her days. As long as she was able, she cheerfully participated in any activity offered, and was a favourite amongst the staff.

Anyone acquainted with mom would know she had a deep appreciation of nature, especially the mountains and flowers. We all think of her when we see the fall array of colors, or a majestic mountain; we hear her voice breathlessly exclaiming, "Oh, isn't it beautiful? Just look at that!" Her grandkids will remember her wonderful cooking and baking; most would agree that her applesauce was a "must have" at any and every family dinner. All of us were recipients of her knitting and crocheting projects. She loved music, and finally in her 70's, having never had the privilege of music lessons, learned to play the bass guitar, becoming the only one in Jake's orchestra who could help the others "keep the beat". She loved to play games, especially Scrabble and Rook and could be very competitive. She was always, always ready for a good cup of coffee and if there was a little chocolate to go with it, so much the better. She was the mother of four: Bill (Lissa) Decker, Janet (Phil)Thiessen, Chris (Tom)Lavigne, and Sharon (Graham) Dick, grandma of ten: Brad, Jon, Ashley, Scott, Alaina, Jennifer, Robert, Colton, Ryan and Andrew, and great grandma to seventeen wonderful children. She is survived by her sister, Dora Veysey. Mom was a kind, caring, sweet woman; there was no doubt how much she valued her family. Most importantly, Mom had a deep faith that sustained her throughout her lifetime. Almost to the end, she could sing out her favourite hymns, and always remembered to give the Lord credit for all she had and was. We will miss her hugs, her smile, and her laugh Her assurance in every difficult situation that "This too shall pass." We were so privileged to have had her in our lives for so many years, and we will miss her greatly. Nevertheless, we rejoice that she is in her eternal home.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made online at donate.mcccandada.ca or by calling

(604)850-6639.

A live-stream graveside service will be available at 11AM.

