



REMEMBERING

Tina Marie Kehler

April 5, 1925 - March 24, 2021



Tina Marie Kehler (née Heinrichs) passed away peacefully at home on March 24, 2021, aged 95. She was predeceased by her husband, Peter Jacob Kehler, her son Peter Eric Kehler, daughter-in-law Miri Kehler (née Falk) and two grandchildren. She is survived by six children — Fred (Shirley) Kehler, (Joyce Kehler née Harms), Paul (Karen) Kehler, Carla Kehler McBride, Ernie (Christina) Kehler, Linda Kehler, Edward Kehler —as well as 12 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

Tina was born in Aberdeen, Saskatchewan on April 5, 1925, the only child of Katharina and Peter Isaac Heinrichs. Her parents immigrated to Canada from the Ukraine in 1922. Shortly after her birth they moved to Morden, Manitoba, then, in 1930, packed up their Model T and moved to Abbotsford, BC. After homesteading on a small property close to what would later become the Abbotsford Airport, they moved to a property on Marshall Road.

German was Mom's first language, spoken in her immediate family, extended family (the Derksens), and church community. From this heritage, Mom gained a lifelong love of German poetry and folk songs. She learned English when she went to school. As a young woman, she was an avid reader and enjoyed artistic handicrafts including flower arranging for our home. She played the piano and had a lovely alto singing voice.

The Heinrichs family helped found West Abbotsford Mennonite Church where Tina was baptized. It was there she met Peter Jacob Kehler. They married on April 19, 1951.

Within ten years five sons and two daughters were born. Having Oma and Opa live next door was a huge help for Mom, and the children valued the time their grandparents spent with them. For the children, life on Marshall Road was filled with playing in the woods, building tree forts, helping in the garden, picking raspberries,

and doing other chores; while surrounded by dogs, cats, goats, and honeybees.

Peter built a successful electrical, heating and plumbing home-based business, allowing him to be an active part of family life. Mom was kept busy looking after children, baking, canning and gardening. She enjoyed arranging flowers for church, and bouquets of garden flowers regularly graced our table at home. Mom was an excellent seamstress and sewed clothes and blankets for her family and for others.

After her husband's death in 1974 from Hodgkin's lymphoma, Mom found ways to provide for her family. She briefly worked as a phone operator for an answering service, working at night so she could be home with her children during the day. She joined Widows Helping Others, a group that provided social and emotional support to women who had lost their husbands. Being a dedicated volunteer cancer driver led her to become the Fraser Valley regional co-ordinator for the Cancer Society BC for 10 years. Mom also explored her entrepreneurial interest, buying and selling a few properties; she had a reliable sense of what made a good investment.

In the 1980's Mom purchased and moved to an acreage on Mount Lehman Road. She continued pursuing her gardening and other interests until a series of small strokes in 2006 and a later fall confined her to the house. Mom was adamant that she didn't want to go into a nursing home, so the family remodelled the house and provided medical equipment necessary for her care. Linda, her daughter and registered nurse, graciously cared for Mom full-time for many years. Assistance was provided by several devoted caregivers, including Brenda, Dallas and Kelly, and eldest daughter, Carla. Her family doctor, Dr Iris Liu, respected Mom's wishes by providing home visits and all necessary medical support for many years.

Despite the discomfort of being immobile for the last years of her life, Mom was remarkably patient and content with her situation, enjoying family visits, television, the dogs, and she maintained an interest in the life around her. Classical music, hymns, and German folk songs continued to be her comfort and joy until the very end.

Mom's faith in God was a lifelong internal experience for her. As she became frailer, a gentleness of spirit and thankfulness became very evident in her. In her final days she slipped into a peaceful place between life and death. At times she recognized the presence of her children with a smile or a word or two. On March 24 she entered into the presence of God. She will be greatly missed.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions there will be no public viewing or funeral. A memorial for immediate family will be held when restrictions have been lifted.

In lieu of flowers a donation to MCC Canada (mcccanada.ca) would be appreciated. Online condolences to the family may be made at Wiebe & Jeske (www.wiebeandjeskefh.com)

