



REMEMBERING

Catherine Islay Buchanan Johnston

July 19, 1949 - September 17, 2022



It is with very deep sadness we announce Catherine has passed away after a brief illness, but we will always fondly remember her and be thankful for the good fortune of knowing her. Catherine was a beautiful person of kindness, generosity, sophistication and charm. She epitomized columnist Cathal Kelly's definition of a perfect woman "She possessed the three S's: sexy, smart and sane." Catherine was predeceased by her parents, Colin and Ivy Johnston, step-father Robert Foote and her brother, Rod. She is survived by her husband Rick McGrath, her brother Colin, and nieces Andrea, Karen, Lindsay, Willow, and Sara. Catherine was born in Powell River, went to Henderson Elementary and Brooks High School, graduating in 1967 but skipping graduation ceremonies so she and two girlfriends could experience Expo '67 in Montreal. The first of many travels she would make. Returning to Powell River she was hired at the local radio station and was soon in charge of writing and voicing local ads. In 1968 she decided to attend the fledgling Simon Fraser University, and after completing her degree in English Literature, in 1972 she spent a summer exploring Europe on her own, returning to work as Assistant Director of the SFU Art Gallery where her interest and expertise in the visual arts began. Tall, attractive, with a fascinating personality and infectious laugh, Catherine was soon popular with staff and faculty and her desk inevitably became a hub of campus news and gossip. She met Rick at the Gallery in 1976. During the 1980s Catherine furthered her interest in art and culture, volunteering for many years as a docent at the Vancouver Museum, a role she would repeat at the Royal Ontario Museum in the 1990s after the family moved to Toronto. She made many close friends in Ontario, and especially enjoyed lunch with the ladies at the Arts & Letters Club and evenings out for stage productions. And exploring ethnic cuisine. She loved Toronto but home and her mother called and in 2001 they bought waterfront acreage on Palm Beach and spent summers entertaining and

amusing their many visitors and beach neighbours. In 2017 they left Toronto and bought a home in Powell River. Catherine was devoted to her mother and quick to defend and promote her Scots and Danish ancestries. Her late brother, Rod was also a great influence on her faintly sceptical view of life. Her interest in travel was ongoing. She and her mother visited Moscow for its 1000th birthday and went to China before it was opened to tourism. With Rick she explored most of the far East the Caribbean, Mexico, the US, Europe and the UK. Catherine will most be remembered as a very special, outgoing person who greatly enriched the lives of her many friends, who may or may not have appreciated her practical thinking, but enjoyed her quick humour and unbounded generosity. She will be deeply missed. A celebration of her happy, if too-brief life will be held at her beloved Palm Beach cottage in the summer of 2023.

