



REMEMBERING **Cecile Grace O'Keefe**

March 24, 1923 - June 25, 2018



Cecile has passed away at the age of 95 years, she died peacefully with her children by her side. We lost our precious mom, grandma, great grandma and friend. Born in Keewatin, Ontario, Cecile was the youngest of 8 children born to Charles Manford O'Dell and Matilda Mae Locke. Most of her siblings were adults and had moved away from home by the time she was born. She lived on the family farm until attending the Mack Training School for Nurses in St. Catharines from 1945-48. After training she worked and eventually took a position as the Head Nurse of Paediatrics at the St. Catharines General Hospital.

In her spare time after nursing school Cecile took up flying and in 1950 was one of the first women to attain her pilot's license at the St. Catharines Flying Club. She was passionate about flying and often talked about her experiences and how exciting it was to be at the controls of a small airplane.

She met another pilot in 1950 at the Flying Club who would eventually become her husband, William Stafford O'Keefe of St. Catharines, they married in 1951. Together they bought Camp Eagle Eye, a fishing/hunting camp with cabins on the Trent River. They worked together at the camp from spring to fall and wintered in St. Catharines until the eldest child attended kindergarten when they sold the camp. By 1962 they had 5 children. They bought a cottage on Bay Lake, near Bancroft, Ontario and enjoyed long hot summers keeping cool with the kids. Cecile was 39 when Stafford died in 1966, we think she was a wonder woman, coping with the loss of her husband, having to go back to work and the challenges of raising 5 kids on her own. She continued to spend many memorable summers at the cottage with her children and grandchildren and instilled in them a respect and appreciation of nature.

In 1984 she retired from her position as a Head Nurse at the St. Catharines General Hospital. She was very caring and compassionate, and volunteered with the Niagara Region Palliative Care Group after retiring. Cecile was adventurous and creative, she was always working on something, from knitting to gardening and stained glass art, she wasn't afraid to tackle the unfamiliar. She was dedicated to her family, her friends, her dog 'Velvet', she enjoyed baking pies, nature, gardens,

winning at cribbage, road trips; short or long and drove across Canada to the west coast several times.

In September 2018 she moved with her daughter Karyn to Powell River, BC where her daughter Paula resides, taking residence at Willingdon Creek Village long term care home.

She inspired us all and will be deeply missed by her five children: Karyn O'Keefe, Paula O'Keefe-Blitz (Marius), Bill O'Keefe (Carol), John O'Keefe (Mary) & Joanne O'Keefe; four grandchildren: Paul O'Keefe (Michelle), Shannon O'Keefe (Matt), Katy Comeau (Derek) & James Beer (Kamila); and four great-grandchildren: Wolfe, Grace, River and Ethan.

Sincere thanks from the family to all the wonderful individuals who cared for our Mom during the last years of her life. She made some special friends while residing most recently at Willingdon Creek Village, Powell River, BC. and previously for several years at Maple Park Lodge, Fort Erie, Ontario.

Cecile's wish was to have a private graveside service and to be interred with her husband Stafford in the O'Keefe family plot at Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines.

Donations in Cecile's name can be made to the Powell River Hospice Society.

