



Gaylene Helen Norman (nee Hurlbert) passed away on Saturday, October 17, 2009 at the age of 74 years.

Funeral services for Gay were held Thursday, October 22 at 1:00 p.m. from the Denareplex in Denare Beach with Captain Krista Lodder officiating. Active pallbearers were her grandsons, Grant Norman, Chris

Bilquist, Tyler Bilquist, Cory Bradt, nephew, Cory Norman and long time friend, Robert McDermott. Honourary pallbearers were all of Gay's friends. Ushers were nephews, Bill Wasyliuk and Ken Wasyliuk. Memorial registry attendants were Arla Robinson and Linda Hettrick. Following interment at the Denare Beach Cemetery, lunch was served at the Denareplex by the Denare Beach Ladies.

Remembrance of Gay was delivered by Todd Bilquist.

Hello, my name is Todd Bilquist, brother-in-law to Patty, friend to Terry and the little neighbourhood kid down the street that always looked for candy and chocolate from Gay. I stand here today to honour and celebrate the life of Gay with you. The one thing you will hear over and over today, whether you hear it from me or other people in this room as you talk to them is "She was always there if you needed her." These words would come to define what Gay would mean to a lot of people.

Gay was born Gaylene Helen Hurlbert on October 7, 1935 on a farm a few miles west of Shell Lake, Saskatchewan to parents Cecile and Bertha Hurlbert. Gay had two older step sisters, Lois and Doreen, and three younger sisters, Dorothy, Joan and Marj. Gay was raised by her grandparents, Howard and Hanna Hurlbert, from the time she was one year old. When Gay was six, she moved with her grandparents to Ontario and lived there for one year before returning to Shell Lake. Gay attended school in Shell Lake in a one room schoolhouse and it was here that she met her life long, best friend, Doreen Smith.

Gay graduated from high school in 1953 at the age of 17 and left home the fall of 1953 to attend Teachers College in Saskatoon. Gay taught school first, in Big River, Sask. in 54-55 and then moved to Denare Beach in the fall of 1955 where she taught school for one year in a one room schoolhouse.

It was while she was teaching in Denare Beach that she met Ronald Norman and they were married July of 1956. She quickly fell in love with this area and became a strong supporter of the Beaver Lake community and was very proud of it. Over the next 54 years Gay witnessed and lived through a lot of changes at the lake. The days of outhouses and no running water, growing from roughly 100 full time residents and a winding gravel road to town, to the lake community that you see today. Gay was always willing to contribute to bake sales and any other fundraiser for the community.

Ronald and Gay had three children: Terry born in 1957, Patty in 1958 and Sandy in 1961.

In addition to raising their family, Gay worked in Jan Lake for five summers as a two way radio operator for the Department of Natural Resources on Fire Control. She then hired on full time for

Resources Fire Control in Denare Beach where she worked for 18 1/2 years. It was during this time as a radio operator, she became a very warm and familiar voice to a lot of remote communities and lodge operators in the Saskatchewan's north country. For many of those people, her voice on that radio was the only contact they would have for many months during the year. I had a chance to talk with one of those lodge owners last week and his words were fairly straight forward. "We always knew she was there when we needed her." After retirement, she worked as a relief cook at the Correctional Centre in Creighton for a number of years. In addition, Gay also worked at the Learning Centre in Creighton and supervised a large number of people writing GED exams.

In the fall of 1979, Gay began her relationship with Bob Streitle. Then in the fall of 1980, they renovated Bob's family home and made it their home for 25 years. In 2004, they sold the family homestead and built a small home on Birch Place, closer to her son and daughter. Bob and Gay would spend many good years with family and friends and their relationship has lasted for 30 years. Bob and Gay also completely renovated their cabin at Meridian Creek and many holidays were spent at the cabin with family and friends, fishing, boating and snowmobiling. Gay and Bob planned their holidays and would take the month of December and spend two or three weeks at their cabin.

Predeceased by her daughter, Sandra Gay in 1979, parents, Cecil and Bertha, sisters, Lois, Doreen and Joan and nephew Robert.

Gay is survived by partner Bob Streitle, son Terry [Susan] Norman and daughter, Patricia (Brent Bilquist). Six grandchildren; Lynn [Cory Bradt], Jenny Norman, Grant Norman and Chris Bilquist (Jennifer Banting), Tyler Bilquist (Nicole Leifso), Mandy Bilquist (Colin Geoffroy). Seven great grandchildren; Caitlin and Jared Bradt, Taylor and Ethan Norman-Hydamaka, Kaylee Banting, Sarah and Cory Bilquist.

Sisters, Dorothy (Engel Neilson) and Marj (George Peoples)

Nephews; Robbie, Perry, Daniel and Cory [Meridith] Norman and great niece Julia.

And long time, best friend of 64 years, Doreen Smith.

Gay was a dedicated Blue Jays fan and family and friends would know to check the TV Guide to see if there was a Blue Jays game on TV before they would phone or visit. She knew the stats and the personal information on all the players and would remember what players started their careers wearing the Blue Jays uniform. In July of 2001, Gay and Bob had the opportunity to attend a Blue Jays and New York Yankees game at the Skydome in Toronto and Gay would talk about this trip for many years after. Her son-in-law and other close friends would love to cheer for the Yankees as this always resulted in a reaction from Gay.

Grandchildren and great grandchildren were always important to Gay and she loved to hear what they were doing. She was so proud of her grandchildren and attended their graduations with an ear to ear smile. I guess this was the school teacher in her.

Gay's hobbies included reading, knitting, embroidery, cooking and playing crib and tile rummy. The challenge was always on to try and skunk her opponent and Bob was often the one that was skunked. Bob didn't have much chance as Gay always threat-

ened that if Bob skunked her, she wouldn't play against him anymore. Of course, this was always just a threat as she did occasionally get skunked, but not very often. Each of her grandchildren learned to play crib at an early age and then more recently tile rummy. Gay loved to knit and the more difficult the pattern, the quicker she was to start and meet the challenge. She knitted a number of christening gowns, baby shawls and carriage covers for each of the grandchildren and great grandchildren. Gay also loved to embroider and made many quilts for the grandchildren and great grandchildren.

But the family all agree that Gay's favourite hobby was cooking. Each year she would make more than 15 choices of dainties and would fix each family household and many neighbours and friends, a tray of fancy dainties for Christmas. Gay and Bob would have many family meals and everyone in the family could count on Mom to make their favourites. This resulted in a number of choices of salads, main meals and many, many desserts as each family member had their favourites and Gay wouldn't want anyone disappointed.

Gay was a planner and organizer and this is evidenced by her boxes with labels in each of her closets and storage areas. She loved to plan for meals and she and Bob planned and cooked meals for a number of family members' weddings. And again, these meals had everyone's favourites and many choices of each course.

Over the years, Gay touched a number of people's lives with her loving and caring nature - transporting the little neighbour boy to the hospital after he was the victim of a hit and run and his parents weren't home, transporting the second baseman to the hospital with a broken nose after being hit by a baseball, feeding the little boy who couldn't find his mother and was crying on her doorstep to name a few. It seemed she would put her arms around you and say, "everything will be okay" and guess what, everything was.

Gay loved animals and was a strong supporter of the SPCA. She also loved the birds and had many feeders that Bob would have to fill each day in the winter. It was not uncommon to visit Gay and see the bird cage in the porch with a bird that they had rescued after it had hit the window or been attacked on the bird feeder or broken a wing. Once the bird was nursed and revived, they would set it free.

Gay was an independent, strong and very caring individual that will be tremendously missed by all those who knew her.

Granddaughter Lynn Bradt read a touching tribute to "Grandma" written with input from all of the grandchildren. Gay always said she was going to get a rose tattoo on her chest. Although, she was not able to fulfill this wish, her granddaughter Lynn wrote a special verse to her grandmother, with love symbolizing not one but a bouquet of seventeen roses.

Gay passed away on Saturday, October 17 (10 days after her 74th birthday) after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer that was diagnosed the middle of August. Gay was a fighter and her strength was evident in the last few days of her hospitalization with her family at her bedside with her 24/7.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to Dadson Funeral Home and Crematorium. Donations were made in memory of Gay to S.P.C.A., c/o Northern Rainbow's End, 55 Main Street, Flin Flon R8A 1J7.