

## Lawson, Olive Lydia – VHS 1944



LAWSON, Olive Lydia August 27, 1925 - March 19, 2016 Olive passed away peacefully March 19, 2016 of congestive heart failure at the age of 90. She is survived by her loving daughters Maureen (Moe) Vesey (John Lyttle), Tricia (Jim) Bowen (nee Vesey), devoted step-daughter Laurie Lawson, step-son Mike Lawson, daughters by choice Runa Fiander and Debbie "Angel" Vermaning, grandchildren Brendan, Taralee, Casey and Brett, and many nieces, great nieces and nephews and their families. She is predeceased by her first husband Yvo Patrick Vesey in 1970 and her second husband Arthur Cyril Lawson in 1998. Olive, or Brixie to her closest friends and family, was born August 27, 1925 in Jeffrey, Alberta. In 1928 Olive's parents, Joe and Ivy Baker, moved their young family west to become pioneers in Metchosin where Joe started a successful egg producing chicken farm. After Ivy's death from TB, Joe married Margaret who was a feisty but devoted step-mother to three kids under the age of 6. The youngest of three, Olive, along with her older siblings Eric and Daisy started their daily routine gathering eggs before walking to the one room school house in Metchosin and later driving the long, winding highway to town to attend Victoria High School. After graduation, the country girl transformed into a beautiful young woman who made a living delivering

groceries in Vic West before being hired as a switchboard operator at the Jubilee Hospital in 1941, where she worked for 38 years. In the mid 60's she was promoted to Manager of Switchboard and Information at the Jubilee Hospital, Memorial Pavilion and Eric Martin Institute where her greatest accomplishment was overseeing the enormous task of transitioning from the old fashioned cord boards to the first modern switchboard system for the three hospitals. During the 60's she was also an active Mom, often driving Moe to synchronized swimming in Colwood or Esquimalt or picking Pat (Tricia) up from the Y. She was a widow at 45, successfully rearing her two teenage daughters with a firm but loving hand. She and long term friend, Art Lawson, started dating in 1973 and married three years later. She retired in 1978 and never looked back, taking up golf, ballroom dancing, canoeing, world travelling and camping instead. Her continued enthusiasm for life and love for her family were evident in everything she did. She was always happy, whether it was weeding the garden or playing crib with anyone who would challenge her. She rowed her lap straight cedar row boat from Gonzales Bay to Clover Point until she was 82, often accompanied by 'her' seal, nicknamed Smarty Arty. Over the 60 years she resided at Gonzales Beach she took daily walks from one

end of the beach to the other, wearing her old black gumboots and happily petting every dog she walked by. She was content outdoors in her waterfront garden, fishing from their motor boat and even walking the Galloping Goose Trail until well in her 80's. Olive had a generous spirit and taught her daughters the importance of volunteering and helping those less fortunate. She was a regular Red Cross blood donor, an annual door to door canvasser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and weekly volunteer at Fairfield Activity Centre New Horizons for many years. She knitted everything from fair isle sweaters to patterned afghans, played with her grandchildren as often as she could, whipped up enormous pots of homemade soup at the drop of a hat, and always had a space at her dining table for one more person. Never one to sit idle, she remained active at Douglas House until five days before her death. Nearly all her family were present in her final hours, thankful for the honour of knowing and loving her. The family would like to thank Dr. Rosenberg, Dr. Manning and Home Team Medical for providing such personal care to Olive in her later years; the nursing team, staff and management at Amica Douglas House where Olive loved living for the last five years and the caring and compassionate staff in both Emergency and North 4 at the Jubilee Hospital where she spent her last few days on this earth.