

HEWETT, Norma Shirley Garnett

A Wonderful Woman, Shirley Hewett, has won the race, spinnaker full, crossing the Finish Line with a fine following breeze. After an encounter with accumulated health problems Shirley died peacefully 4 Feb. 2008, leaving her daughter (Kari), sons (Geoffrey/Karen and Hal), grandsons (Lister and Zeke) and an expanding family circle of friends to celebrate her life and remarkable achievements. Norma Shirley Garnett Hewett (nee Smith) of Victoria, BC, was born 22 Feb. 1933 in Vancouver, BC. Her mother was Norma Kenney of Clark's Harbour, NS; her father William Smith of London, ON. The diversity of Shirley/Charlotte's interests and activities reached out to touch so many. She was a noted journalist and writer, especially of marine and nautical issues, an editor, photographer, marine historian, school teacher, sailor, wonderful mother, trusted friend and gentle custodian of her patch of ground on Sea View Rd. where the camas, crocus and camellia radiate the sublime peace of our planet. Shirley began her life-long path as a scribe at the Ubyssy student newspaper while a UBC undergrad (BA 1954). She subsequently became a sustaining leader, mentor and supporter of other writers through the Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC), serving on the National Executive and until recently as President of the Victoria Chapter. Her dedication was recognised in 2006 with the PWAC Regional Volunteer Award. She was well known for her involvement in: the Swiftsure International Yacht Race, and for many years she was the CFA radio voice of Swiftsure; the Classic Boat Festival (Honourary Commodore); the Canadian Forces Sailing Association; the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and other marine affiliations. The author of Swiftsure: the First Fifty Years, Down the Hatch, Royally and The People's Boat HMCS Oriole: Ship of a Thousand Dreams, Shirley also wrote the "Around our Shores" column in the Victoria Times for many years and countless articles published in Quill and Quire, Beautiful British Columbia Traveler, Monday Magazine, Pacific Yachting, Sailing World, 48 North and other journals. She was welcome aboard the CCGS Narwhal, HMCS Oriole, Messenger III and in the kitchens of West coast Lighthouses, and was a pioneer community recycler. Deep gratitude to her dear friends/neighbours and family for their continuous kind support over many decades and especially in the last few months. Many thanks also to her hospice workers and physicians for their care and concern. In a message to a friend toward the end of her days, she wrote: "I am living day by day, and hoping I have stored up enough good karma in this lifetime to earn a gentler ride in whatever dimensions of reality my soul goes on to inhabit." Her loved ones and friends picture her on a wooden boat, pulling up to a moorage in that great sea beyond. Donations (and in lieu of flowers) with thanks to the Disabled Sailing Association of BC, Victoria Branch, 4135 Lambrick Way, Victoria BC, V8N 5R3.

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