

Birth and Death Notices

Deaths



MARY CONE BARRIE
MARCH 10, 1945 -
FEBRUARY 18, 2009

Born in Yorktown, Virginia to Dr. Thomas and Barbara Cone, Mary was delivered by her dad when she arrived prematurely in the middle of a thunderstorm. At the end of her life, her own daughter and husband of forty years held her in their arms. Her loving brother Tom and sister Elizabeth (Smallridge) were able to be with Mary in her final weeks.

Daughter, sister, friend, lover, co-conspirator, wife, mother, scholar, mentor, leader, artist-Mary lived so many lives, all so well, so deeply. Most brilliantly, and for so many, Mary was an educator. She taught her husband Andy how to listen, her daughter Jessie how to learn, her dog Wrigley how to be a therapy dog, so they could together bring light to the lonely and the infirm, and at Toronto's St. Christopher House, she taught at least one man how to read.

Growing up in Bethesda, Maryland, Mary attended the National Cathedral School, going on to a B.A. at Sarah Lawrence College. Her Masters from Brown, prepared her for her first work in Montreal, teaching at the Convent of the Sacred Heart and The Study. Taking an evening course, she first heard the word that was to launch Mary in a whole new direction: Androgogy - the art and science of teaching adults. The family moved with Mary to Toronto, where she pursued a second Master's and then a Ph.D at the University of Toronto, studying how adults learn new technologies.

This brought her an offer from Deloitte Touche, where she helped introduce the first personal computers to their accountants. From there Mary went to Clarkson Gordon and then, as the Director of Education, to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

But all along her great goal was the best job in Adult Education in Canada. Mary realized that ambition in 1994 when she was named Director of the School of Continuing Studies at the UofT. During her eleven year tenure "Dr. Mary's" devotion to her instructors, her attentiveness to their students' needs, and the brilliance of her staff saw the School enjoy unprecedented growth. Determined to see adult learners enjoy the same comforts as undergrads, she invited Raymond Moriyama to stunningly reinvent the School's home at 158 St. George Street, where the Atrium bears Mary's name.

When she retired from the UofT in 2005, her work as an educator wasn't over. An immigrant to Canada herself, Mary approached the Art Gallery of Ontario and volunteered to create a program that would make a gift of a one year AGO family membership to new citizens. When the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson learned of this, she invited Mary, through the Institute of Canadian Citizenship, to grow the program, first across Toronto, and now, to cultural institutions throughout Canada.

Mary was, is, a treasure in the lives of those of us who love her and those who have learned from her. We are only grateful for the time we had with her.

Our deepest thanks go to the doctors and nurses at the Mount Sinai I.C.U. and the Princess Margaret, who gave Mary an extra year of life. Our dear friend Dr. Rob Buckman did his best to help us navigate the labyrinth called cancer. And for making it possible for Mary to spend her last months at her beloved farm, our endless gratitude to Dr. Scott Houston for his care and humanity, the Reverend Candice Bist for her friendship and spiritual support, and to the visiting nurses and caregivers supplied by the Central West CCAC.

Mary's life ended all too soon. The cause of death was cigarettes, which first addicted her at 14. In lieu of flowers, contributions to the crushing of the tobacco industry would be greatly appreciated-whether in dollars to the Non Smokers' Rights Association, or by persuading someone you know, in Mary's name, to quit now.

A memorial to Mary is being planned.