

2020 has been a year that none of us will forget. For our family not only is there a global pandemic going on that has turned life upside down for everyone, but we have suffered 2 losses this year. About a month after her 95th birthday (Dec 31 2019), Grandma suffered her first stroke in January and was not able to return to her home at Chartwell and would spend her time in hospitals until she passed away on Sept 15th. From January until March 13th, we were able to visit grandma as we wished with no restrictions. Brian was able to visit from BC to spend time with her and his sister Susan. Grandma was not improving and her daughter Susan (my aunt) was losing her battle with ALS and she passed away in early March. I visited Grandma on Sunday March 8th and that would be the last time I would see her until Canada day, because on March 13, COVID-19 became a reality in Canada and everything shut down and there were visiting restrictions in hospitals.

In March, nobody could have imagined that this would go this long and families would be forced to say goodbye to their loved ones in very different ways than they would have before. Grandma was a social butterfly and loved being around people and would have wanted a traditional celebration of her life. But the times we are in right now make that difficult.

For my sisters and I, this loss is significant as it now means we no longer have any living grandparents. I guess you could say we are grandparent orphans now. I don't think that's a thing, but that's what I'm calling us, because we are grandparent less now. We were very fortunate to have all 4 of our grandparents well into our adult lives. Each one of them was very different and unique in their own ways and taught us very different lessons and we love and miss them all.

There are so many things I could say about grandma but we don't have that much time. She was the coolest grandma with a genuine zest for life. Her outlook on life was simple, take it as it comes. She had an incredible will to live as long as possible. She always used to say, I'm not ready to die yet, I haven't spent all my money. She also had her 90th birthday party when she was 87, just in case she didn't make it to 90. She loved a good party. For her and grandpa's 60th wedding anniversary, she rented a hall and had a celebration similar to a wedding complete with meal and reception with dancing, lots of dancing. She taught us that you can be in a relationship with someone and have completely separate and different interests and make it work and be happy for over 60 years.

Grandma had unlimited acceptance and love for everyone. When my sister Lisa would dress up to attend the theatre with her, grandma always greeted her with a smile and concern for her walking on the uneven sidewalks with her high heels. Stories of how she used to prepare for a night out, explaining how pin curls work, led Lisa to a series of experiments with vintage hair and dress. Lisa would often do a pin curl set prior to visits and they would talk for hours about old Hollywood starlets and their various styles. Grandma was never fazed by the vintage fashions Lisa would wear to visit. Even showing up with curlers still in with a scarf wrapped around she would say, 'I remember those days, I tell you!' Lisa could talk about any of her bizarre new hobbies and grandma always listened with undivided attention and encouragement no matter the subject. This unconditional encouragement and support is what Lisa will try to provide for her nieces and nephew.

Grandma loved watching movies, movies of all kinds. Michelle and I stopped over on a Friday night in October around 9pm. It was dark and there was a thunderstorm happening. What was grandma doing? She was sitting in the dark, watching a horror movie by herself...who does that?? Well Grandma did that and she loved it. Michelle and I didn't get that trait from her, we don't watch horror movies on bright sunny days let alone in the dark during a thunderstorm in October before Halloween.

She also loved a good of poker with our family and Uncle Ted. Those were some of the best times we've had and always very entertaining as she teased her baby brother lots and he teased her right back. We had lots of laughs during those games. She always wanted to know what cards you had in your hand and would keep betting just to see what you had instead of folding. Dad would always say, 'Mom, you can fold you know' and her response was 'I know' but she never did, well maybe sometimes she did but not very often.

She also loved her lottery tickets and was actually pretty lucky. She's won an SUV and \$10,000 on scratch ticket. She called me one night and I happened to be at my parents and when I answered she said 'Hi Jacqueline, Can you take me to the Western Fair Slots tonight, I think I won \$10,000'. I said what, are you sure?? and she said I'm pretty sure. My dad and I went over to see her and check her ticket and sure enough, it was a winner. Because of the amount, we had to go to the OLG to claim the prize (which was at Western fair casino). I took her and she filled out what felt like a hundred forms, and the gentleman told her that the cheque would be mailed in 4-6 weeks. The look on her face was priceless, she thought she would get the money right there. She was not happy about waiting for the money. She asked quite a few times, do I really have to wait that long?

Grandma liked doing things her way. You could make suggestions to do things another way, which may be easier and more efficient, but 99% of the time, her response would be 'no , I think I'll do it my way', ok grandma no problem, and you would do it the way she told you. She always knew what she wanted and that is good trait to have. My dad has inherited that trait (that's why his nickname is Dorothy) and according to my husband and kids, It's been passed on to me as well. And I'm pretty sure Michelle has that trait also.

Grandma loved spending time with us, whether it was going to the Grand theatre, hanging at her house playing games and chatting, or going on the train to Toronto to see a show. She was always fun to be around and always made the best of her time with us. We all enjoyed our time with her as much as she enjoyed her time with us. We will miss her peanut butter rice krispie balls and her Christmas punch though. I'm really hoping Marlene and I'm going out on a limb here, or possibly Brian has that recipe because I know my dad doesn't have it and we need to get our hands on it!

Grandma, we love and miss you and hope you are resting in the sweetest of peace - you deserve it after 95 and 1/2 years. But it's not good bye, it's we'll see you later. (Maybe for a Rumoli or poker game - and bring your money)