



Mary Douhaniuk

August 7, 1939 to February 19, 2002



“She loved the north and the people there,” recalls Bill Douhaniuk of his sister, Mary, who died at age 62 in Salmon Arm after spending a lifetime as a public health nurse in Canada’s north country and other isolated areas working with indigenous people.

In her memory and with her blessing, Bill presented Shuswap Community Foundation with \$70,000 to establish a permanent endowment fund. He says that it was her wish that the income from the fund go towards: health equipment and training; programs involving social justice; support for arts and culture; and projects that contribute to the well being of residents of the Shuswap.

Mary was born at Killaly, Saskatchewan, graduating from the high school there before entering nurse’s training at the Regina Grey Nuns Hospital.

Her nursing career began in 1961 at St. Peter’s Hospital in Melville, Saskatchewan, and continued to include Public Health duties in Humboldt, La Ronge, Fort Smith, Port Simpson and Massett in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

In the mid-1970’s illness and convalescence intervened and Mary took some time out.

Later in the 1970’s, she was posted at God’s Lake, Manitoba, and other stints on reserves around the Calgary area and Deschambault Lake, Saskatchewan.

By the late 1970’s, Mary was posted to Moosonee Outpost Hospital at James Bay and later to the Eastern and high arctic. By the late 70’s and early 80’s she had worked at some six Inuit communities.

She finished her active career serving native reserves in Spiritwood, Saskatchewan.

Bill says his sister also loved to travel and took time out over the years to cruise to New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines and Hong Kong and later took her mother and sister Betty to Victoria, BC. In 1987 she toured Austria, Germany and Hungary,

In 1999, a year after her retirement, she moved to Salmon Arm and enjoyed watching Bill with his new nursery in the Salmon River valley opposite Mt. Ida. Following her death, Bill named a series of small ponds he had setup to drain some of his land with the names of the places she had worked.



Mary was interred in the Mariahilf Cemetery in Saskatchewan.

A travelogue of one woman’s career: La Ronge, St. Francis, Great Bear, Fort Franklin, Sandy Bay, Deschambault Lake, God’s Lake, Sarcee, Rankin Inlet, Frobisher, Albany River (James Bay), Igoalik, Woolaston, Southend Reindeer, Spiritwood, Chitek Lake, Withekan Lake, Pelican Lake/Big River.

Bill says she also loved music and was a fan of Salmon Arm’s Roots & Blues Festival.

Notes by Marg Shand & Cindy Derkaz