



REMEMBERING
Joyce Lamerne Tilstra
August 17, 1937 - April 23, 2021



The lovely Joyce Lamerne Anderson was born to parents Clarence and Vita on August 17, 1937 in Stettler, AB, the third of 3 children. Danish heritage ran thick in her family as 3 of Joyce's grandparents came to America from Denmark while the 4th grandparent was born in America after her parents had emigrated from Denmark. Joyce's exact ethnic roots cannot be fully traced, however, as her own mother had been adopted. Both grandfathers had worked as carpenters, but Joyce's grandpa Anderson eventually gained fulltime employment as a dedicated and beloved pastor. Her father, Clarence, farmed near Stettler, and her mom was likely a farm homemaker by the time Joyce came along, though, while her first child was still a tot, Vita Anderson had taught school away from home for a time to help when crops had been poor. At well over 6 ft., Clarence towered over about 4' 11"; Vita. Joyce's parents were faithful Adventist Christians, and there is more than one tale of her father's dramatically answered prayers. Joyce's dad was a loving father, loved to sing hymns in his memorably rich voice, was a great storyteller, and liked to keep people happy. Her mom was a good cook and would take her children on Sabbath afternoon walks in the woods, where they would collect and bring back nature nuggets. Joyce's siblings were spaced quite far apart in age. The eldest, Audrey was at least 17 years her senior and was already away at CUC, while her brother, Gerald, was about 12 when Joyce was born. So each child grew up, in a sense, as only children. Sister Audrey, when she married and started her family, settled at Warden Junction a little over a mile away from Joyce and her parents. The oldest of mom's nieces was only 4 years younger than Joyce, and as a result of their age and proximity, Joyce was more like a big sister than an aunt to her niece-playmates. The girls would occasionally tease mom, calling her Auntie Joycie, which was not well received, but didn't otherwise hinder a warm

comradery! Mom would often come through the fence, across the pasture and past a wooded area to visit her kin, where they spent many happy times on a small haystack, their imaginary castle-home off the ground, where they would make believe they were fair maidens, or play house in an old grainery. Joyce taught her nieces songs to sing as they played. She was good at being their play leader—cheerful and creative. “What a treat it was” her niece recalls, when she got to stay over for a week and sleep in “Joycie's” bed with her, while her mom, Audrey, was recovering in hospital from delivering a baby brother.

When mom was around 7, she had a good, well-trained horse named Dick, on which she would ride to school. Dick was smart — he was trained to walk over to something little Joyce could climb up on in order to mount the horse. Other pets included a dog named Ponto, cats—Nip & Tuck, and later had a horse named Prince as an adult. At some point, Joyce and her parents moved off the farm and into the town of Stettler where young mom rode a train with her niece to and from a Christian school in Erskine. The conductor always welcomed and cared for the girls. Since Joyce was the 'big girl' at school she once again assumed the role of play leader and would organize recess games. There was a lot of 'Ante-I-Over' as the school was just the right size to throw the ball over top and run around like crazy. Ever the sacrificer for Christian education, dad Clarence obtained work away from home near Hanna, AB in order to support her schooling, when it came time for Joyce to leave home to attend high school and a year of college from 1954-57. No longer the “big girl” at school, at CUC a few self-conscious corners of Joyce's teenage personality emerged. She dreaded practicing voice in the music rooms—either because of thin walls or room dividers that offered little in the way of privacy. Whatever the case, we're so glad she stuck with it, as those practice sessions likely helped hone mom's beautiful alto voice that those close to her will always remember. Another example of shyness expressed itself at mealtimes where there was arranged mixed seating in the cafeteria — 3 boys & 3 girls assigned to each table. To avoid the awkwardness of having to converse with the young men, mom and some of her other girlfriends would wait until the very end of the meal to get in line so that they could sit at a table without any boys! That meant that sometimes no main course remained, so the bashful girls were left to eat bread. It should be noted that there was more to Joyce than just shyness. Indeed, her friendliness, good humour and pleasant disposition earned her many lifelong friends during these boarding school years.

Though mom ever downplayed her scholastic abilities, her employers obviously must have seen more than she did in herself, as she was hired immediately upon school completion. In June 1957, at just 19 years of age, Joyce began working at the Alberta Adventist Conference office in Calgary, where she would enjoy continuous, fulltime employment for the next 11 years. She served as Receptionist and Secretary for the Sabbath School & Lay Activities department. It appears she must have been thrown into the deep end pretty fast — a Canadian Messenger photo features mom at a typewriter in deep concentration, likely preparing a pamphlet or daily newsletter, in the midst of a bustling and chaotic Camp Meeting press room—this would have been only 1-2 months into her new job. In Calgary, outside of work, Joyce enjoyed active involvement with

roommates, friends and church life. Over the years she assisted in the production of MV plays like "Chaos in Corinth", attended church workshops, and was even a shoeshine girl for a church Investment fundraiser. A roommate from that time recalls much fun, laughter, and pranks together. It was also in Calgary that mom would enjoy occasional visits from her childhood niece-playmates who'd long since moved to small town BC and were now young ladies. Like a good "big sister" Joyce taught them the survival ways of the big city—Always lock your doors and, when walking down the street, never turn your head or otherwise acknowledge admiring boys who whistled from car windows. Joyce's time in Calgary eventually drew to a close when she decided to move to the BC Okanagan where her parents had earlier relocated to retire. The move proved a beneficial one for her social life; it wasn't long until she met and began dating a handsome young man named Adolph. The two were married on December 14, 1969. Joyce & Adolph settled in Summerland and began their family a couple years into marriage in 1971. Their 3 daughters—Holly, Aris, and Tina—were each spaced about 2 years apart and kept mom very busy. Mom recalled feeling conspicuously old while recovering in hospital with at least one of us, while being surrounded by much younger mothers in their early 20s, though her age would be considered normal by today's standards.

For as long as she was able, mom stood her ground with a "no TV in the house" policy until eventually she was outnumbered by equally determined offspring. Her rule had been a wise one for the pull of the screen proved itself strong. In the summer the more indoor-oriented of us would watch everything almost all day, including 2 favourite soaps on our fuzzy, B&W 2-channel universe. In an effort to dissuade our poor, age-inappropriate tastes, we'd sometimes hear mom approaching and would quickly flip channels to watch the noon news like little saints. But mom outsmarted us by sometimes joining us. How awkward it felt—either stuck watching the news while the long-anticipated soap storyline was advancing without us. Or worse yet, the terrible guilt of mom's disappointed presence beside us while a soap's inappropriate scene began to unfold.

Like her father before her, Joyce prioritized Christian education, and as a result, her kids were enrolled in Penticton Adventist School a year after it opened. This required great sacrifice on both parents' part, particularly mom, who faced challenges re-entering the workforce to provide for tuition. I am forever indebted to mom for this determined, selfless service. From an early age, mom taught us about tithe and budgeting through a system of distributing our nickels and dimes into labeled containers. Chores and allowance were introduced as we got older. And as teenagers, mom gave us our share of the government-issued Family Allowance cheques so we could buy our own clothes. Despite working almost fulltime, dealing with the illness, medical emergencies and moves of aging parents, mom somehow kept a rhythm to the house in prepping daily school lunches, and always having a balanced evening meal made from scratch, which often included vegetables grown from our large garden. Fridays were the day we were all assigned chores and raced to complete cleaning before sundown. In reality, there were times where we'd con mom into buying us potato chips in exchange for labour, eating the

spoils on the way home, then not fully completing our work end of the bargain.

Friday night suppers, though simple, always felt special—with favourites like soup and chips, or burgers with mom's homemade patties. Eventually the classic Adventist haystack found its way into our home, with our family's personal twist of potato chips in lieu of corn chips (which dad found less scratchy on his gums), and beans came in the form of Libby's canned beans in sauce. Likewise, Sabbath lunches were always a highlight: a favourite was mom's spaghetti casserole (with cream cheese and black olives in it, topped with crispy crumbled corn flakes); Tender Bits fried in Shake n' Bake were also a universal hit. Cinnamon toast on an occasional Sabbath morning was a delicious treat. Other food fondly associated with mom: pear butter on toasted, homemade bread. Summer featured peach shakes and an occasional beach picnic with potato salad and hot dogs, or corn on the cob. Raisin jumble cookies and zucchini loaf were the most common baking in our house. The less frequent cinnamon buns were always appreciated as a labour of love. Birthday cakes were often homemade, and we enjoyed "coin cakes" in our early days. At Christmas one of mom's specialties were small, round snowball cookies drizzled with white icing, topped with red & green maraschino cherry slivers reminiscent of a poinsettia, and with an almond tucked in the center.

Mom was industrious. From working in the garden, to canning, to making entrees for the coming week, Sundays were typically busy. In summer, the vegetables were harvested, cleaned, husked, cut, shelled, and blanched in preparation for freezing. Ever an expert in recycling, mom rewashed and reused what appeared to be old Noca, large-sized milk cartons for freezing vegetables. In their repurposed form each freezing container was a few inches high, with the cardboard side panels cut down to create closure flaps. I suppose their large, uniform square shape was preferred for maximizing freezer space.

Mom's secretarial abilities found their way into the home in the form of filing cabinets, where she kept a neat and orderly system of storing bills, important documents and mementos. Because mom took so little time for herself, it was so delightfully and jarringly out-of-character to catch mom relaxing on the couch on a rare Sunday morning, enjoying one of our Archie comics or a used Mad magazine one of us had purchased at a pawn shop.

A seldom seen spirit of adventure turned south when mom was talked into trying out a newly purchased, used dirt bike. Her ride lasted only a short distance before somehow both mom and bike ended up on their side. Thankfully the minor spill resulted in no serious injury, though mom sported a wicked bruise on her shin for the next 12 months. But this one incident stands in contrast to her much more typical vehicular caution—we all remember mom opting to drive around the block in downtown Penticton in order to avoid having to make a dreaded left-hand turn!

Mom was faithful to her church and her weekly attendance was nearly unbroken. She strove to support special programming — from evangelistic meetings, to VBS, to vespers and choir practices. Sometimes at home on Friday evenings she'd play piano and sing hymns. A couple of her favourites were

“The Wonder of it All” and “How Great Thou Art”. Once she managed to get her young family to sing “His Sheep are I” for special music. Another time she & dad sang a duet round “The Lord is my Shepherd”. (Towards the end of her life, well after the tumor had robbed her of so much, mom and dad were still able to harmonize in that beautiful duet while in hospital.)

In our younger days, mom tried to make Sabbath afternoons special by reading stories to us from the Junior Guide and Adventist Review. She always read our lessons to us at bedtime and made sure we knew our memory verses. Joyce’s daughters always enjoyed mom’s full support in their studies as they grew into young adulthood. It was often stressed to us that it didn’t matter even if we failed our courses—what mattered more was our life balance, health and rest. Never were any of us pressured to become this or that, or urged into any profession. And though we all settled into fairly average lives, for some reason mom always took inordinate pride in her girls and routinely expressed heartfelt gratitude in who we’d turned out to be. Her sons-in-law came to enjoy equal standing—almost every phone conversation ended with mom saying with full conviction how fortunate she was to have the best sons-in-law, and how she thanked God for them every day.

In April of 2006, mom was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor. During the long journey to recovery—through surgery, rounds of chemotherapy, and all the ups and downs along the way—mom weathered it all in her characteristic uncomplaining nature of contentment, peace, gratitude and faith. The evening before her brain surgery, a hospital social worker explained that patients of such operations are never the same, and that we should brace for personality changes of some sort. I could never be sure, but if anything, mom came out only more sweet, more grateful and more expressive of her love and pride for her family. And while the doctors suggested that what had been lost due to the tumor’s growth mom might never recover, I’m so thankful that mom regained her strength and personality, and that we were blessed with more than a dozen “bonus years” with her. The only thing that went completely AWOL was mom’s drive and initiative. She was finally able to enjoy the rest she so long deserved. And we’re so thankful to dad for his patience and heavy lifting in all the house & yard work and caretaking ever since.

But far outshining mom’s history, experiences and our recollections, was her extraordinary and lovely personality. Mom had a sense of humour. She took delight in retelling an encounter she once had with a salesman who, over the phone remarked that, with her lovely voice, she would make a great television anchor. But upon meeting her in person, the compliment though reissued, was notably downgraded to “a voice perfect for radio!”

Where most of us typically become more entrenched in our ways as we age, in the area of church life preferences mom became more adaptable, and if it were possible, even more grace-filled—on matters from church wear & music to women in ministry. Mom’s disposition throughout her life was unwaveringly pleasant & contented. She could entertain herself for hours in simply watching people bustling in the streets and parks. Mom’s spirit bathed itself in

gratitude—she was always quick to count her blessings. She always chose to focus on the good in others, spoke only the best of people—always gave the benefit of the doubt, and avoided all gossip and critical talk. So consistent and uplifting was my mother in this way of life that it wasn't until my mid-30s that I can clearly pinpoint a conversation where she revealed her inner thoughts towards someone suspected of grave wrongdoing. A few years ago, when I confided in mom about a situation causing me interpersonal strain, she shared with me her simple formula for overcoming negative feelings toward difficult people. She said that when she thought of such a person, she would imagine them as God's FAVOURITE people; ones who were particularly special to Him. In doing so, her heart would become more tender as she'd begin seeing them through God's loving eyes. She said that this made it so easy to pray for and accept such people. Indeed, mom's most precious quality was her spiritual life, the source of her exemplary character. Many times in the early morning hours, her girls would catch a glimpse of our mother's form in semi-darkness in the family room having her private time with God. Sometimes she'd be reading her Bible, or the book "The Desire of Ages"; other times, she was on her knees in silent prayer. Mom knew where her help came from. In recent years Mom routinely expressed how she'd had the best life—how grateful she was that she'd never had to endure any real hardship. This left her loved ones dumbfounded; some of the hardships she faced would have been enough to crush others. But her long-cultivated dependence on God gave Joyce the strength to pass through storms, and the ability to view her life through a lens of peace and a heart of thanksgiving.



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