



Nancy Alice Brunner

JUN 18, 1938 - APR 29, 2021



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Florence May Holschu Brunner was in the field picking strawberries on a Friday afternoon in June 1938 when she felt her contractions start. Weighed down with her baskets of strawberries and her heavy belly, she lumbered back to the house she shared with her husband, Lester and their three other children: 15-year-old stepson, Joe (from Lester's first wife), 10-year-old daughter, Ruth, and 6-year-old son, Lester, Jr. She called her sister, Josephine and arranged to have her watch the older children, then waited for Lester to come home from his job as a dyer at the Pendleton Woolen Mills. When he arrived, they got into the old Plymouth and drove off to the Oregon City Hospital. Saturday morning, the baby came - a daughter. They named her Nancy, a name picked out by their older daughter, Ruth, and added Alice as her middle name. After the required stay in the hospital, Florence brought Nancy home. Upon hearing the news, relatives and neighbors came to the house. Lester greeted them then promptly took them out to the barn to show off the new John Deere he had just bought. "Lester! They're not coming to see your tractor - they're coming to see the new baby!" Florence clucked. He just smiled, bemused, and ignored her fussing - something he did throughout their 50-year marriage. Florence and Lester built a large 4-bedroom farmhouse on 24 acres and a half a mile down a country road named after them. They moved in when Nancy was about three and it was there that she grew up. Nancy would say that she had a wonderful childhood. The property itself had endless treasures to explore and discover. To begin with, there was the standard flower and vegetable garden which bordered the lawn around the house. There were various fruit trees. Rows of red raspberries grew further out. Lester planted a filbert orchard and lined the driveway with black walnut trees. The trees on the area nearest the road were logged and the stumps were blown out by dynamite. In its place they grew hay for feed. The back part of the property overlooked Oregon City to the south. To the east was a beautiful unobstructed view of Mt. Hood which



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was perfectly framed in the dining room window. At the back of the house, there was what was referred to as "The Park" - a large grape arbor that had benches built on the inside. In the twilight hours, the family would sit out there in the long summer evenings. The family raised chickens, an occasional turkey or two, a milk cow, a couple of riding horses (her favorite was named Billy), and dogs. Just beyond The Park grew a giant maple tree. From a high branch hung a rope swing with a wooden bench. The maple tree also served as the entrance to the densely wooded canyon. The canyon was a wonder of its own. Lester and the children pioneered trails through the forest which was full of wildlife, flowers, and stinging nettles. One trail led to the pump house. Another to the dump. The trail through the woods eventually led down to the bottom where a small creek trickled through. Nancy walked the half-mile up the lane to her bus stop every school day from 1st through 12th grade. She told the story of wearing a jacket on the cool fall and spring mornings then carrying it home in the afternoons. On frosty winter mornings, she stomped through puddles that had turned to ice. She graduated from Oregon City High School on June 1st, 1956. She started working as a stenographer in Portland, taking the streetcar from Oregon City. Not much later, her brother-in-law, Bob West, set her up on a date with Owen Miller. Bob and Owen worked together at a gas station in Portland. Nancy's parents liked Owen. He had a strong work ethic and plans to go to school to get a degree in Engineering. They started dating and married on September 1, 1957. Six weeks before the wedding, Nancy's brother, Lester, died of Hodgkins Lymphoma at the age of 26. Nancy and Owen started their journey together in married student housing at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. A few months later, they found out they were pregnant. Diane Nancy was born September 25, 1958. Nancy worked the night shift at the local hospital and Owen worked odd jobs to make ends meet until he graduated with his Engineering Degree in May 1960. He attended a job fair at WSU and was hired by North American Rockwell in Los Angeles. So, Owen, Nancy and Diane drove his '47 Ford (which he still owns), with a trailer, from Pullman to L.A. where Owen started his career in aerospace. They lived with his Uncle Andy and Aunt Esther for a few weeks before finding a permanent place to live in Inglewood. Once getting settled, they had another baby, this time a



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son, Roy Owen, born on May 2nd, 1961. Theirs was a traditional family. Owen worked outside the home and Nancy worked inside the home as a homemaker. The family faithfully attended the First United Methodist Church in Inglewood. Later, when the children were in middle and high school, she took a part-time job at Crocker Bank and worked there over a dozen years. But her first love and calling was homemaking. Keeping house, decorating and gardening brought her constant joy and satisfaction all through her life, up to her final days. She also loved being a mom and was not afraid to use a wooden spoon for more than just cooking! She took Roy and Diane to the park, beach and museums, played, sang songs, danced, sewed clothes and volunteered with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and the PTA. Like all parents, Nancy had her faults, but, together, she and Owen created a happy, stable family, complete with generations of family pets. After Diane and Roy left home, the marriage ended after 28 years. Both Owen and Nancy went on to remarry. Owen and Pat have been married for 33 years. Nancy married Bill Sturrock, a family friend, on Valentine's Day, 1987. Bill was born and raised in Victoria, BC. His engineering career brought him to the States, first to Boeing in Seattle, then to Northrup in Los Angeles, then back to Victoria. When he and Nancy married, she moved to Victoria where she and Bill lived for the rest of her 34 years. In Victoria, Nancy found a job in the office of Victoria Van & Storage and worked there for over 10 years before she retired. She and Bill bought a house in View Royal with a view of the water of Esquimalt Harbor. Nancy decorated the house, bringing her love of the outdoors in. She and Bill created a beautiful Japanese and wildflower garden. They adopted a Schnauzer named Helmut who lived with them for 10 years. After Helmut died, they adopted Darcy and Lexi. The two dogs walked Bill and Nancy around the neighborhood thousands of times, through parks and trails and joined them on travels until they went to doggie heaven together in 2017. Nancy and Bill regularly visited children and grandchildren in L.A., Denver and Whidbey Island. They took a cruise up the Amazon River, traveled to Australia and England, went to Hawaii twice, visited friends in Ottawa and explored Vancouver Island. In recent years, she and Bill took Greyline bus tours to various places in British Columbia. Nancy was a good hostess and was pleased to host friends and family as guests. She was surprised by a visit



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from her mother and nieces, Ruthann and Laurel in 1988. Diane and Roy surprised her with a visit for her 65th birthday. And Diane surprised her for Mother's Day in 2014. Nancy was known for her quick wit, a sassy sense of humor and a sometimes bawdy streak. She was also known, admittedly, for her German stubbornness and lack of patience. She was a talented artist. She painted some oils (as did her father), but her favorite and best medium was watercolors. She liked most music, especially as played by Andre Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra. She played the piano. She knew the words to lots of songs, especially musical and Broadway tunes from the 40's and 50's, along with the oldies of her generation. She would often sing the lines of a song, appropriate for any given occasion. She often danced, just for fun, especially with the grandkids, and whenever a band was playing. There are stories of her learning to twerk (which you can share later at dinner)! Nancy was very thrifty and loved a bargain. She wasted nothing and did not get rid of anything until it was used up or worn out. She was queen of the kitchen and queen of the leftovers. Among her other favorites were fried chicken, chocolate sodas, German chocolate cake, Impressionist art, the color blue, robins, crows and wildflowers. She believed in fairies. She also believed in God and had a lifelong relationship with Him. She read her Bible and The Upper Room devotional daily. She and Bill have been active members of Gordon United Church for many years where they have built many lasting friendships. Nancy enjoyed good health all her life until her final days when she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. True to character, she had no patience for being sick, so, mercifully, her illness lasted only three months. She had no fear of dying and accepted things matter-of-factly. She passed into the arms of her Lord on April 29, 2021, holding Bill's hand and listening to Andre Rieu. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lester and Florence, her brother Lester, her sister, Ruth, and her half-brother, Joe. She is survived by her husband of 34 years, Bill Sturrock, her first husband, Owen Miller, her daughter, Diane and husband, Bob; their children, Bethany Brown, Elyse & Jonathan Stephens and great-granddaughter, Sophia; she is also survived by her son, Roy, his wife Marika and their children Nick & Katie Miller and great-grandchildren, Luke and Peter, Andrew & Hannah Miller and great grand-



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children Norah and soon-to-be baby brother; Natalie & Keenan Samuelson and great-grandchildren Rowen, Eva and Andreas.



Memories only last if you share them

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