

2:43

We have a program summarizing the activities for today. These are all activities that mom loved and that we loved doing with mom. This includes pool, ping pong, virtual golf, jenga, playing cards, colouring and jigsaw puzzles.

I'll send out a link to an electronic version of it later for those who are watching the livestream on YouTube. We hope that those of you who are watching from afar will also do some of mom's favourite activities.

There is a wordsearch in her honour and we're encouraging everyone to write down any additional words that come to mind when you think of mom so that I can add them to the updated version of the word search puzzle.

And, we are making a wreath with paper gardenias with the names of all the people who are at mom's celebration of life in person or watching the live-streamed version of it.

6:00

First and most importantly of all.

Welcome. I want to thank you all for being here today, both physically and virtually.

Since some of you are watching virtually and can't mix and mingle with mom's family and friends as those who were able to be here in person, Before I deliver my eulogy and have our toast to mom, I wanted to introduce you to some of mom's family and friends. They'll each come up beside me a few at a time.

My brother Kevin, my husband Roland

My daughter Heidi, son Stefan and his girlfriend Georgia.

My sister Diane and her husband David.

Diane's eldest son Peter and his fiancée Franzi.

Diane's youngest son Blair and his girlfriend Emma.

10:06

Now onto my speech.

I'll start with what I hope will be the hardest part of my speech today.

Mom: As I was on the emotional roller coaster of looking through photos to curate a collection that best represents who you are, what you loved doing, and what you meant to us, I came across a digital scrapbook page I'd created for you for Mother's Day about 10 years ago. When I read the caption under the photos and the word, 'Mother', I immediately burst into tears. That caption has stood the test of time and is even more meaningful today than it was 10 years ago.

**Mother:** To the **world** you are a **mother**, but to your family **you** are the **world**.

Phew, I did it.

And, it is so true.

For Kevin, Diane, me and mom's entire, large family, our **mom** means the **world** to **us**.

**AND**

It also means the **world** to us to have all of **you** here (both physically and virtually) with us today.

**People are so nice.**

This is what I murmured as Heidi gave me a hug this morning after I, again, immediately burst into tears opening a card that was delivered with some fresh flowers today. I didn't even know I needed fresh flowers today. And, poof, magically they appeared just when I needed them.

**People are so nice.**

And that is what I felt as I have received phone calls, text messages, flowers, sympathy cards, emails and hugs (physically and virtually) since mom passed away on 6 January.

**People are so nice.**

Your unwavering love and support is so very appreciated. And like the flowers I received this morning, that love and support comes even when I don't even know that I need it.

And all the "I's" that I'm saying, I think of them as "we's", so if I don't say "we" I mean "we".

Mom, I and the rest of her family and friends have been receiving that love and support in the years leading up to her passing. We have all been blessed with your continual **love and support** over the past several years as mom's health has deteriorated. Not a day goes by when I haven't sensed and appreciated that love and support. Your continual interest in her health and happiness have meant the **world** to **us**.

**People are so nice.**

But enough about me and all of you. This speech is about my mom, our mom.

**Our mom was so nice.** Extremely **nice**. Always **nice**. Unwaveringly **nice**. And without a doubt, mom was one of the kindest people that I have ever met. And to our immense delight, Kevin, Diane and I had the incredible good fortune of having her as our mom.

But mom was so much more than the textbook definition of **nice**.

She was **kind**. She was **thoughtful**. She was **strong**. She was **capable**. She was **caring**. She was **determined**. She was **stubborn**. And like all of you who are here with us today, she was **supportive and loving**. And **fun loving**.

That's why we're having a **celebration of her life**.

She enjoyed so many activities, many of which those who are here in person can do with us here today. And those of you who are watching virtually will hopefully take some time to do them on your own and with people that are physically close to you.

We created a 'program' for today which includes a wordsearch puzzle and a collection of photos, which, together, capture just some of who mom is, what she enjoyed doing and the people that were important to her.

Before we move onto all those things, let's step back a bit. I'm going to add a few more things to what was included in her [obituary](#).

Alice grew up in Chapeau, Quebec on Allumette Island near Pembroke, Ontario. My mom comes from strong stock; she has 10 siblings. She and several of her siblings and mother eventually followed her eldest sister to Brantford, Ontario, where Alice trained as a hairdresser. Alice opened a beauty salon in Hagersville, Ontario where she met and married her husband and our dad, Howard. There are a few photos in the slideshow of her and her beauty salon.

Mom and Dad met on a blind date. A friend of my mom's worked at a bank and they went to a big gala in Toronto together. So that was their first date and after that dad was a frequent visitor to her beauty salon. And the rest is history.

After they got married they lived in a lot of different cities. My dad had a few different professions. He started as a teacher which he wasn't that fond of. He then worked as a meteorologist which brought him to a number of air force bases. Mom lived with him in a lot of them and stayed back in Ontario when he was working near Winnipeg. Eventually they landed in Scarborough and Toronto where their long-awaited children Kevin, Brenda, and Diane were finally born. They moved to and settled in Ottawa shortly after Diane was born.

In addition to a family, Alice and Howard built three cottages (Buckshot Lake, Lac Gagnon and, finally, on the Ottawa River near Lapasse). Despite growing up along the Ottawa River and having cottages, for many years, our mom did not swim. One of our cottages had no road access and was built by shuttling all the materials over by boat. She had to live out of a tent with 3 children while the cottages

were being built. Our first cottage had road access in the summer but only lake access in the winter. There are photos of her with us all bundled up in the snow by that cottage. Yes, she let dad haul her and the children up to the cottage in the winter.

She was so **nice**.

Boating. Camping. Swimming. Yes, she eventually learned to swim and she made sure that we all did, too. I hated swimming lessons and remember crying from the pool side of the fence at the RA outdoor pool during swimming lessons. But I'm really glad that she did.

So mom was a sports fan, more of an armchair sports fan than a participant in a lot of sports. She did curl. She's a bit short. Really **sweet**. But definitely **short**. The perfect height to measure the bottom edge height of volleyball nets.

She was a big armchair athlete. Dad hauled her down to New York to see the Yankees for their honeymoon. She spent many hours, particularly after dad passed, in the company of lots of sports on TV. Hockey and baseball were her favourites but she liked football. And she loved getting out to her grandchildren's games.

In addition to mostly being an armchair athlete, and cottage life, mom had many pastimes that included baking and cooking. There are lots of sweet treats here today that Diane baked using some of mom's favourite recipes.

She did golf, played ping pong and pool (that's why we're here at the pool hall), she did lots of word searches (that's why we have the word search puzzle in the program), she liked to watch games shows, Wheel of Fortune, Y&R on the TV.

It was really sad when her ability to **communicate** and convey anything through language were diminished to the point that she couldn't watch her 'show' (Y&R) on TV with everyone else at 5:00. She continued to watch sports until that, too, became too much for her. She played a lot of slots on her iPad after she, my Aunt Claire and their good friend, Emily, stopped their regular outings to have a meal and play some slots at the Rideau Carleton Raceway.

As the years progressed and mom's primary progressive aphasia advanced, mom's ability to speak and to understand speech disappeared, as did her ability to read and write. But her ability to **communicate** remained. It was incredible how expressive her eyes were. And how effective her gestures and movements were in helping her to **communicate**. We have lots of good stories, so talk to us afterwards about how good she was at **communicating**.

And how many different emotions and requests she could express using the one sound that remained to her, 'yuri'. **She** had so many different rhythms, intonations, pitches, tones, inflections and volumes when she used that one word.

And, **we** all had many different emotions and feelings when we heard her saying 'yuri': **irritation** when it seemed incessant, **frustration** when we couldn't figure out what she was trying to say,

**compassion and tolerance** when we would pause to imagine what our own lives would be like without being able express even our most basic wants and needs nor to comprehend a single, solitary word that was being said to or around us and, ultimately, **extreme sadness** when she stopped saying it all together.

Mom definitely **lived her life well**.

A full life is not one just filled only with ease and happiness. A full life also contains **challenges** and difficulties. It is how we face and live with those **challenges** that define us.

And so, I want to be like my mom when I grow up.

While I could do without having as many **challenges** as she faced, I definitely hope that I have inherited just a small portion of the **strength and grace** she continually demonstrated while navigating the **challenges** and difficulties that she faced.

Whether it was raising three children alongside her beloved, bipolar husband and the unpredictable cycles of that his depression and mania that his condition brought on,

Or learning to navigating life without language,

Or rebuilding her strength and ability to consume any foods other than liquids after her bout with COVID a few years ago.

Or adapting to her ever-diminishing abilities to move her arms and legs and being confined to a wheelchair,

Mom faced and lived with her life's **challenges** with **strength and grace**.

Now I'd like to make a toast to my mom.

I've been trying to figure out which toast to my mom would be the most appropriate.

To a **life well lived**?

To a person **well loved**?

To Alice, who'll **we'll all miss**?

No shortage of suitable toasts

Keep is **short and sweet**

Just like mom always was and always will be.

## TO ALICE

27:10

We have our space reserved until 4:00 and we can stay longer. There are lots of activities. We hope that you'll enjoy them all. There are 2 key activities which would mean a lot to us.

Gardenias were one of mom's favourite flowers. They were in her wedding bouquet. We have it as our theme for today. We have some gardenia cards that we'd like everyone to sign that we'll put on a wreath. The wreath will then contain all your **love and support** which in turn will represent mom's ongoing, continued **love and support** for us all.

And we have a bigger version of the word search puzzle out on the table. Of course we hope you'll complete your own copy. But, we'd also love for you to find a few words on the big version. And, I'd like to get all of your input about what other words come to mind when you think of Alice. I'm going to be making a version 2.0 of the word search puzzle and I'd like to include your words that describe what mom means to all of us.

And there's golf at 2:30 so play a virtual hole of golf with mom.

Mom definitely had mastered the game of Jenga. She attained the designation of 'life master' playing duplicate bridge which is a significant accomplishment. We didn't share her passion nor talent for bridge but we did play a lot of euchre as a family. We had many guided games of solitaire with mom. And we have some jigsaw puzzles out.

I'll turn it over to mixing and mingling.

On with the celebration of our mom's life.

In addition to all the activities, please make sure to enjoy some of the sweet treats that our mom always baked for us. Diane has baked up a storm. We have lemon squares, oatmeal raisin cookies, date squares, chocolate cookies, raising squares and chocolate chip cookies. For those who are with us virtually, we'll make sure to share some baking with you when we next see you in person.

We'll also be uploading the slide shows. There is a shorter and a longer version. Once we have them uploaded we'll share the links with you.