REMEMBERING
Marilyn McCombe

June 5, 2022

⁓⁓⁓⁓⁓⁓

Together, we watch the light below the storm

Coming across the mountains

And down through the valley

This is the storm we have seen coming for a long time

This is the long light that endures.

(excerpt from Poem "Watching the Light" by Elizabeth Cunningham, Nelson BC)

Marilyn died peacefully at Mountain Lake Seniors Community on June 5, 2022. Cremation has taken place, and she will be interred at the Nelson cemetery at a private ceremony with family and friends in September, followed by a small gathering to celebrate her life.

Originally hailing from Montreal, Marilyn was a skilled artist in Nelson. She will be remembered by her many friends for her grace, her vivacious personality, her fine intelligence and her creativity with colour. Many homes in the Kootenays are adorned with Marilyn's vivid paintings of nature. Whenever people walk past the Lakeside Park greenhouse, they see a legacy of Marilyn's: the vibrant design of orange poppies painted on the green road dividers. In 2013, Marilyn coached a team of youth to paint her poppies design on behalf of the SEEDS society. She was an avid volunteer with the society, spending many hours with seniors and youth growing vegetables for the Nelson Food Cupboard in the City's old greenhouse, until it was demolished by storms in 2014.

In much younger years, Marilyn lived in the town of Hudson outside Montreal. She studied art at McDonald College (McGill University), and became a successful potter with her own studio. Marilyn was also an intrepid world traveler. For awhile, she worked and lived in London U.K. and toured with a theatre troupe in South Africa. In much later years, she often traveled to India with friends from Nelson.

There, she studied and practiced meditation at an ashram in Khulu. At home in Nelson, she continued to attend meditation groups in the area. Her strength of presence had a profound impact on people, who quickly trusted her integrity and discerning fairness. Her friends fondly recall the sumptuous meals and gatherings in her garden cottage on Falls St, and the signature red poppies crowning her garden.

Marilyn originally moved to Nelson in 1987 to join her then husband Andre Virly. Together, they created a wilderness trek business called "Dancing Mountain." The marriage and business parted ways, but Marilyn, always the adventurer, remained in Nelson to forge ahead with her passion for art, generating many friends and working with co-creative painters. Over the next 25 years, she participated in workshops, gallery showings, and 'plein air' painting groups. When not painting, she refined her gift with creative writing and joined a writing group called 'The Sloggers.' Always at her side would be a beloved cat or dog and a good book to read.

In 1989, Marilyn pursued her passion for healthy living by enrolling to study massage skills at the Kootenay School of Rebalancing. Following this, she worked in the office of a Nelson naturopath where she constantly studied emergent approaches to health care. She often talked about feeling inspired by her grandfather, Dr. Charles M. Kingston (1867-1948), who provided health care in Grand Forks and served as the MLA for the electoral district of Grand-Forks and Greenwood (1928-1933).

In 2018-19, Marilyn noticed symptoms of dementia. A circle of her friends helped Marilyn to lovingly transition into variations of extended care, first at Lakeview Village and then at Mountain Lake Seniors Community. Marilyn's past three years residing at Mountain Lake were peaceful and content. She appeared to live within a radiant inner spiritual centre. Her smiles lit up a room.

Her friends and family are deeply grateful for the compassionate care she received from her dearest friend Rivkah Moore, and from Dr Trevor Janz, and the staff at Alpine and Falconridge cottages.

Her much loved younger twin sisters, Pam Selkirk and Polly McCombe, grieve her passing as do their families. They will journey to Nelson in September to honour the life of their sister.

She will be greatly missed.