

Rose Shaffer

On May 25, , 2011 our "Beautiful Irish Rose" passed away at 97 years of age. Rose was born in Dublin, Ireland on March 2, 1914. She was the 4<sup>th</sup> of 5 children. She had three sisters and one brother and is the last of that generation. Although life in Dublin was full of hardship, they were a very close knit family who shared their daily lives, life experiences, meals and holidays together. Cynthia's memories of her life with Rose and her extended family was one filled with kindness, laughter, long summers at the seaside, and most of all love. She remembers coming home from school, and as they all lived next door to each other everyone was present for all the meals. The kettle was always on for tea, and Rose and her sisters were cooking in the kitchen and the children were always served first. As Cynthia is an only child she is referring to her cousins with whom she has a very *close* bond. The routine never varied – Monday – hot brisket and chips; Tuesday-cold brisket and chips; Wednesday-fish and chips; Thursday- eggs and chips, and you can guess what Friday was – chicken and chips. Rose kept that tradition going when she came to live with Cynthia and took care of Adam and Steven.

As a young woman Rose loved to hike, walk and read. After writing an essay which was published in the local newspaper, she won a scholarship to

upbringing. Their love and adoration was reciprocal. She was there for all the important events in their lives, but sadly, as she got older she was not able to participate with or see on a regular basis her great-grandsons, Benjamin and Jonathan. Rose however was determined to attend Steven and Christine's upcoming wedding in 2 weeks time. She had her dress picked out but <sup>even</sup> she just ran out of steam. ~~she~~ <sup>sadly</sup>

Cynthia <sup>always said</sup> ~~has explained~~ that having Rose live with her was <sup>a gift,</sup> ~~great~~ as it allowed Cynthia the opportunity to go <sup>back to</sup> ~~initially~~ High School and then on <sup>to</sup> University of Alberta where she obtained her Ph.D.

Like everything in life, things change and evolve, and when Adam and Steven left home to go to University, Rose found it lonely and isolated, living in the West end. At almost 80 years she "re-invented" herself and moved into <sup>the</sup> Angar Villa downtown. She would go for walks or take the bus downtown or to the mall. She was a very independent and self-contained woman and lived that way until ~~she was~~ 4 years ago.

<sup>Rose</sup> ~~She~~ was a remarkable woman. <sup>she</sup> ~~Rose~~ started smoking at age 14 and continued until age 94 (that's over 80 years). She defied all nutritional rules

took Rose on beautiful holidays especially to Hawaii until she was 90 years old. where she said that she and Joe liked to get “pleasantly inebriated.” They never missed a Monday at “Joey’s Only” for fish and chips, and Sundays for fried eggs. Rose also loved the care packages that Joe brought her every night on his way home from work.

A few years ago Rose told Cynthia how lucky the family was to have Joe in their lives. She said that she had always wanted a son, and that finally she got one. No son could have been more loving, caring, kind and generous than Joe. This was especially evident over the past 5 years. No matter how many trips were cancelled or cut short, Joe never complained. He was always there for Rose and sat by her bedside for weeks when she was in hospital, and he continued to see her almost on a daily basis when she was in Laurier House. If you had asked Rose how many children she ~~had~~ <sup>has</sup>, she would reply two – a girl named Cynthia and a boy named Joe. Not only was Joe there for Rose, but Cynthia believes that it was with his strength and support that she was able to take such good care of Rose over the years.

Rose and Cynthia had an amazing and wonderful relationship. Rose said “they understood each other.” Although of totally different personalities and

**thank them for their compassionate care and kindness and ~~compassions~~  
and their patience with Cynthia's phone calls and visits to their office.**

In November 2008, something special in Rose's life occurred with the arrival of 3 angels on the scene. Team Rosa was formed, and although Rose would say it was a "little bit unusual" these 3 amazing woman, Sonia, Selma and A.J., took wonderful care of Rose. They made sure Rose was always dressed up and had her make-up on. With their help Rose continued to have enjoyment, dignity and meaning in the last years of her life,.

On one of the many times that Rose ended up in Emergency Cynthia recalls an occasion when she, Joe, Sonia, Selma, and A.J. were all hovering around Rose's bed. The doctor became frustrated and said "who are you all", and Sonia replied we are "family" and they truly were. . How blessed Rose, Joe and Cynthia were to have these woman take such wonderful care of Rose with true love, compassion and dedication.

About 20 years ago Joe came into Rose's life and something special and mutual happened between them. Rose always said that she and Joe understood each other, and there is no doubt about that. Joe and Cynthia

most difficult times she was courageous and graceful, and emanated a sense of tranquility that made everyone feel safe and secure.

~~Rose I said could not hear Cynthia never~~  
 Cynthia explained that she never heard Rose raise her voice, get angry or use a swear word. Rose's philosophy was to handle every situation with kindness, and as such there was no need to yell or insult. However, Rose had 2 expressions she used to sum up her observations of any behavior, conduct or attitude she thought was inappropriate. She would state quietly that the person or event was either "a little unusual" or "a bit peculiar" and these statements had more impact than any tirade.

There are many people that Joe and Cynthia would like to thank in making the last few years of Rose's life peaceful, safe and dignified. Firstly, Dr. Harvey Sternberg who took wonderful care of Rose over the years and "braved" her smoke filled apartment many times when making a house call. Harvey has secretly admitted that Rose at 94 years old was his only patient that he said <sup>should + could</sup> ~~would~~ keep on smoking.

The family would also like to thank the staff at Laurier House Lynnwood, many of whom they got to know personally over the past three years, and

All of you know Cynthia, Joe, Adam and Steven but probably <sup>one</sup> ~~are~~ not aware of the other significant family in Rose's life. This <sup>family</sup> ~~is~~ is Carolyn Gawalko, her husband Terry <sup>her</sup> and children Kathryn and Allan of Calgary. When Cynthia moved to Canada in 1973, Carolyn, who was a neighbor's daughter, would baby-sit for Adam and Steven and this is how Rose and Carolyn met.

Despite a big age difference, their friendship was based on mutual love, trust, <sup>to each other & they shared much through the yrs. ~~friendship~~</sup> respect ~~and always laughter~~. They would go for long walks together, took <sup>friendship & bond grew stronger!</sup>

bridge lessons (unsuccessful) together and would go to Woodward's or

Eatons for tea, and of course a smoke for Rose. Rose loved and cherished

her friendship with Carolyn, and over the past few years as Rose became

frail and her memory faded, Carolyn never faulted with her daily phone

calls, often 2-3 times a day and her regular visits from Calgary.

Unfortunately Carolyn broke her leg early this week and can't be present but her husband and son are here today.

Not only did Rose teach everyone around her about respect and friendship, but most of all about family and love. To be loved by someone with no conditions is truly a gift, and Rose was always available to help and support without an agenda. In return, Rose was easy to love. Being around Rose with her kind and gentle smile would lighten up the room. Even during the

and lived <sup>mainly</sup> on white bread and butter, cheese, eggs, and tea and cookies. She never ate fruit or vegetables, chicken or meat, and it was not until Sonia, one of her caregiver came into her life that she was introduced to vegetables!

Rose was a very private woman, and although never involved with organization or community work she leaves behind a huge legacy. This legacy could be used as a model for all of us on how to live our ~~life~~ <sup>lives</sup>.

Firstly, there was no prejudice, hatred or discrimination. Rose treated everyone with the upmost of respect and courtesy, and this set the tone for anyone in her company to follow by her example.

*Just the other day that she never heard her mother raise her voice or say a negative thing about anyone else!*

Secondly, with respect to friendship there is an expression that if you have one true friend in your lifetime you are fortunate – well Rose had many true, special and dear friends. Her friend Bernice has known her for over 20 years. Bernice would <sup>often</sup> take Rose for lovely outings, <sup>for a</sup> tea ~~and~~ lunch and throughout the years has continued to visit and call Rose on a regular basis ~~and~~ Rose loved Bernice dearly.

Skerries Secretarial College in Dublin. This was a great honor and accomplishment for the times, and over the years Rose worked as a shorthand typist. She took great pride in her short hand and typing, and spelling skills and never needed "spell check". In fact, until a couple of weeks ago she was considering coming out of retirement and was in the process of negotiating a deal with Joe to work part-time in his office. She had such a <sup>wonderful</sup> beautiful sense of humor. Joe would offer her a hourly wage and she would smile and "roll her eyes" as a way of telling Joe what she thought of the offer. <sup>Rose's</sup> The care-givers loved it.

Rose married Jack Issac Shaffer in 1944. He was from the East end of London. He was an accomplished furrier by trade. He passed away in 1979. Due to the high unemployment rate in Dublin he often worked in London, <sup>so</sup> and Cynthia was raised <sup>mainly</sup> by Rose and her extended family.

When Cynthia moved to Germany in 1968, Rose came to live with her and <sup>there</sup> <sup>in 1973</sup> ~~then~~ to Edmonton in ~~1973~~. Rose was an amazing Bubbee to "her boys", Adam and Steven. Her grandsons were her pride and joy and she never hesitated to tell everyone she met what they had accomplished. How lucky Adam and Steven were to have such a thoughtful and caring <sup>Bubbee</sup> woman in their



temperaments they made it work, and always figured it out. They both agreed that they were a good team and adored each other.

Cynthia asked that I thank her friends for their support and understanding over the past several years which has been very difficult. She wanted you to know that she really appreciates the phone calls, empathy and listening and that it really does help.

Rose always said that she had a "good run". She touched our lives in a quiet and understated way. She has left a lasting impression on all who knew her by her kind demeanor, resilience and wonderful sense of humor.

Rose was a True Lady. + I feel privileged to have  
known her + to have enjoyed her  
Sincere + warm friendships