

Wife of Pinecrest Nursing Home resident dies of Coronavirus

By Pamela Vanmeer - March 28, 2020



Jean Pollock

KAWARTHA LAKES-The nurses at Ross Memorial Hospital combed Jean Pollock's hair, brushed her teeth and bathed her gently before she took her last breath this morning at 8:05am.

Jean was in isolation, fighting Coronavirus since Monday. Her husband Ted is a resident at Pinecrest Nursing Home in Bobcaygeon and Jean visited him daily. She also volunteered at the home until two days before the home was closed to visitors.

Jean's daughter, Pam Smith, lives in Vancouver and had been driving across the country to get to her mother and be closer to her family. The sad reality is even if she made it on time, she wouldn't have been able to physically see her mother because she was in isolation.

"I want everyone to realize this is a desperate situation that is going to get worse. Much worse."

Smith said in a Facebook post to her friends. "I might be the first person you know that is being directly affected right now, but not for long. My wish is that you are all staying indoors and safe."



Pam Smith and her mom Jean Pollock in happy times.

Pinecrest Nursing Home has become the epicentre of the Coronavirus pandemic in Kawartha Lakes. So far three residents have tested positive. They stop testing at three and assume everyone has the virus at that point according to officials. 14 staff have also been confirmed positive. Two residents of the home have died from the virus. Smith says Jean's husband Ted Pollock has been experiencing the symptoms as well but is doing better today.

There are currently 27 cases of the deadly virus in Kawartha Lakes.

"If you feel the urge to say prayers – please also send them to the amazing staff at this nursing home who are desperate and dropping like flies. And to the residents that are locked in their rooms, confused, angry and not fully able to understand what is happening." Smith said. "And then, please turn those prayers on yourself. You need them too." says Smith.

As Jean's condition worsened Smith was able to tell her mother how much she loved her over the phone. "She could hear me and would open her eyes – but she couldn't talk. If they take her mask off her oxygen drops to 30 out of 100." Smith told Kawartha 411 News.

Pinecrest was closed on March 14th due to the outbreak and Jean began feeling unwell that day. By her birthday on March 17th, she still wasn't feeling well but thought it was just a bad cold.

On Thursday, Jean who had COPD, went to the hospital, was tested and sent home. By Monday her condition had deteriorated, she called an ambulance and was hospitalized.

Doctors didn't hold out much hope but Jean had a strong will to live and surprised everyone by rallying over the next few days.

"The doctor told me he was shocked at her will to live. The nurse told me at 2am when I called to check on her that she was "one tough cookie". Smith said.

But then, she took a turn for the worse.

"For me, this will never be the time I got to meditate, finish that book or enjoy some solitude." Smith said referring to the social distancing measures in place. "it won't be some spiritually enlightening moment for me to reflect on. It will be the time that took my beautiful Momma away from me. Even at 82, it feels too soon and unfair."

While Jean may have been "one tough cookie", she also had a heart of gold. She loved the

Bobcaygeon community and volunteered with many organizations. She spent years as a volunteer at Pinecrest and was most recently on the Board of Directors of the Kawartha Art Gallery in Lindsay.

Jean was also a very talented artist. She was a graduate of the Commercial Arts Course at Danforth Technical School in Toronto. After raising her daughters Pam and Tracey Cainer she decided to paint in her spare time. Jean donated several of her works to local fund-raising efforts including Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Boyd Heritage Museum in Bobcaygeon.

Many of her works were deeply personal.

"The Ranch" is one Jean painted the couple's cottage.



The Ranch

"Bessie" was a painting of their dog before she died.



Bessie

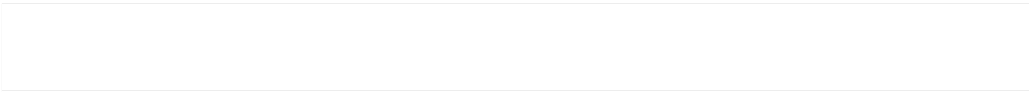
View from Tortola is the view from Tracey's home in Tortola, looking out at the water.



The sisters wanted to thank the nurses at the hospital who were there for their mom in her final hours. "These women are doing unreal work." Smith said of the nurses. "They should get medals for the amazing work they've done for her."

Medical staff are literally risking their lives to take care of patients with this virus. According to Business Insider 3,300 medical professionals in China came down with the virus and 13 died. More than 100 workers in Boston's three biggest hospitals have already tested positive for Covid-19, according to local news reports on Wednesday. 13 staff at Pinecrest alone have tested positive.

Officials are urging residents to follow strict physical distancing protocols, stay home and only go out if absolutely necessary.



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Pamela VanMeer is a two time winner of the prestigious Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) Award. Her investigative reports on abuse in Long Term Care Homes garnered international attention for the issue and won the Ron Laidlaw Award. She is a former reporter and anchor at CHEX News, now Global Peterborough and helped launch the New CHEX Daily, a daily half hour talk show. While at CHCH News in Hamilton she covered some of the biggest news stories of the day.

