



**McCOWAN,**  
Barbara Ruth  
(née Brandon)

Barbara McCowan, a warm, gracious and selfless person beloved by many people, passed away in Kingston General Hospital on Wednesday, April 9, 2014 in the loving presence of her husband, Jim, and her two children, Catherine and Ian.

She was born and brought up in Toronto, much of that time in what was then Swansea. She and her brother, Ewart, enjoyed an active life with their parents, Elmer and Ruth. The family was much engaged in public service and in their church, with Elmer serving as Reeve of Swansea and later as M.P.P. for West York.

After graduating from the University of Toronto, Barbara interned at Toronto General Hospital to become a professional dietician. She worked as a dietician for Maple Leaf Mills until her marriage to Jim.

Barbara and Jim spent their first year of marriage in Cambridge, England, before moving to Kingston where they made their home for the rest of her life. She never returned to a dietician role, devoting herself with dedication, energy and much enjoyment to looking after Catherine and Ian and Jim. She was superbly gifted at creating a warm and supportive home environment, with her frequent early-morning creation of a broad range of baked breakfast treats being just one memorable example. After Catherine and Ian left home to make their own lives, she did work for a few years in one of the medical labs at Queen's but her major activities outside the home were choral singing and a range of volunteer roles - as a CGIT leader, as an assistant at Red Cross, as a volunteer at Hospice Kingston, and as a fitness exercise leader for elders at both the Red Cross and the Senior Centre. She was active for decades in a variety of roles at Cooke's-Portsmouth United Church, in some of which she was a trailblazer as the "first woman". As a soprano, she sang in her church choirs in both Toronto and Kingston, in choirs she sought out during stays in Aberdeen, Scotland and in Cambridge, England, and most particularly and enjoyably, in the Kingston Choral Society.

Barbara obtained much pleasure from experiencing new places and talking to new people, and she traveled widely. Highlights included three separate opportunities to live for a year in the United Kingdom and, in early retirement years, three gloriously long trips to New Zealand and Australia. She enjoyed gardening, walking in the countryside, reading, music, dancing, and, in her youth, figure skating. She was graceful in movement and particularly enjoyed activities where her movements were guided by music. Always careful of her fitness, she walked with Jim to his work for a couple of decades, a return walk of over an hour.

She became ill several years before her death, and the illness progressed steadily. She faced this with her usual stoicism, fortitude and grace, and was still able to light up a room with her warm smile right to the end. Loving, gentle, kind, happy, trusting, she is sorely missed.

She is survived by her husband Jim, of Kingston, by Catherine and her family (Steve Williams, Callum, Cameron and Shona) in Stouffville, and by Ian and his family (Beverly Whitelaw, Andrew and Megan McCowan) in Ottawa.

A celebration of her life will be held in Cooke's - Portsmouth United Church, 200 Norman Rogers Drive, in Kingston at 1 pm on Saturday, May 10, 2014. For those who wish, donations in her name can be made to Cooke's - Portsmouth United Church or to the University Hospitals Kingston Foundation (directed to Kingston General Hospital).

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