



RITA MARIE GERMAINE BIENVENUE

It is with deep sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Rita Bienvenue on October 1, 2020, at the age of 89 years old. Rita had a spark for life, an infectious laugh and enriched everyone's life that she touched.

Rita was born in 1931 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan and was raised on her parents' farm in a vibrant French community near Carleton and Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. Rita graduated from Duck Lake Stobert High and received the Governor General's Medal for highest marks in Provincial exams.

Like her sisters, Monique and Denise, she next graduated from Nursing at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, and then went on to earn her PhD in Sociology at the University of Minnesota at a time when such opportunities for women was uncommon. Rita was recruited back to Canada as a faculty member in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba, where she taught, inspired and mentored several generations of university graduates. Throughout her career she was prolific in research, an enthusiastic teacher, and a passionate advocate for equal rights of women, indigenous peoples, and the richness of the contributions of Canada's multinational heritage.

Rita enjoyed a very rich personal life with her friends and colleagues, and greatly enjoyed supporting and attending the performing arts in Winnipeg. In her family life she was a profound mentor to each of her nieces and nephews, always challenging those around her to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to continue to grow daily. In her retirement, Rita had a deep passion for travel with friends, to the importance of the arts to our culture and lives, and to a life-long challenge to continue to learn. Not surprisingly, after her retirement, she focused this tremendous energy on her volunteerism and dear friends at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. A highlight of her later life was when she celebrated the richness of her lifetime with friends and family by hosting a fabulous 70th birthday at the University Women's Club of Winnipeg. Rita was always proud of her French heritage and that she carried the flagship of the Bienvenue family name. Our family has been blessed with over a century and five generations of Bienvenue reunions, and all of us that survive Rita will continue to practice and hold this tradition dear to our hearts.

She will be deeply missed by her sisters, Denise North and Madeleine Hicks; her cherished nieces and nephews, Michael Spencer (Dana), Cheryl Meyer (John), Marc North, Ron Spencer (Nancy), Karen Magee (Kieran), Geoff Hicks (Cindy), Randall Hicks (Wendy) and Carolyn Hicks; 10 great-nieces and nephews and five great-great-nieces and nephews. Rita was predeceased by her parents, Emmanuel and Jeanne Bienvenue; her sister Monique Spencer; her brothers-in-law, Ken Spencer, Robert North and Harold Hicks; and her nephews, Cameron North

and Daniel Hicks.

We give thanks to the staff at Heritage Lodge. Due to COVID restrictions, a private family service will be held with interment in Thomson "In The Park."

Rita would encourage us to continue to serve and donate to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the National Museum of Human Rights.

Family and friends may sign a book of condolences at DignityMemorial.com