

HILKKA IKONEN



HILKKA IKONEN 1919 - 2014 With great sadness we announce the passing of our dear Hilikka on Monday, January 13, 2014 peacefully with family at her Seine River Residence. Hilikka was predeceased by her husband Erkki in 2003, her sisters Pirkko, Irja, and Sirkka, her brothers Jukka, Erkki and Ossi in Finland, also her granddaughter Shauna, and her grandmother Winnie from Winnipeg. Hilikka will be greatly missed by son John (Sharon), daughters Liisa (Spencer), Tuula (Guy), grandchildren Carson (Selena), Raina (Ryan), Maija (Chris), Merritt (Nathan), Tyson, Dana (Terry), seven great-grandchildren Winnie, Tegan, Kyler, Mali, Sydney, Sadie and Isla, her sister Ritva (Martti) in Finland, and numerous nieces and nephews. Hilikka was born in Jyvaskyla, Finland. She and Erkki emigrated from Finland in 1953 with their two children John and Liisa arriving in New York first and then heading to Saskatoon, SK. Daughter Tuula was born in Saskatoon. "Sisu" is a Finnish word meaning inner strength. Hilikka epitomized this quality. Early in life she dealt with diphtheria, whooping cough and scarlet fever. Recovering from these gave her the resilience, strength and stubbornness to face life's adversities. Hilikka lived through the Finnish - Russian War and the Second World War. She voluntarily worked for the Lotta Svard Organization helping with the war effort, sewing uniforms and other auxiliary tasks. Hilikka loved learning and this quality led her into a career as a lab technologist. She first worked at the University of Saskatchewan in human tissue culture and then in the Department of Plant Science at the University of Manitoba in plant tissue cultures (cytogenetics). Not only did she love her work, but she also made numerous friends, some of whom were exchange students from all over the world. These students often visited her at home. After retirement, Hilikka and Erkki enjoyed many vacations to Finland, Sweden, Norway, Mexico and Florida. Hilikka really had the ability to connect with others. She loved to entertain. Her home was her haven and she always welcomed family and friends for dinners, visits, and coffee and "pulla" (Finnish buns). She loved to bake and cook. Hilikka and Erkki built a cottage at Beaconia which provided so many memorable family gatherings. She dearly loved her children, grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. Sounds of children playing in her home energized her and brought her joy. She remained actively involved with their lives right to the end. Hilikka had so many interests which kept her mind alert. Knitting beautiful scarves, mitts, toques, socks for all family members was much appreciated. She also had a love of floral arranging and gorgeous bouquets were always a result of her efforts. Creations by Hilikka included many wonderful jewelry pieces - necklaces, bracelets all so unique and again for family and friends. Gardening was another passion. She still attended to her flower garden up to the age of 92. She took great interest in artwork for her home and other crafts she completed were rag dolls, stone and mushroom figures. Hilikka loved and lived life to the fullest! This passion for life helped her battle her struggles with osteoporosis,

congestive heart failure and a recent hip surgery. She never complained and most remarked she always had a smile on her face! In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba, 6 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB R3L 0K6; or Osteoporosis Canada, Manitoba Chapter, 123 St. Annes Road, Winnipeg, MB R2M 2Z1, or to a charity of one's choice. A memorial service will be held on Friday, January 31, at 2:00 p.m. to celebrate Hilikka's long life at the Neil Bardal Funeral Centre, 3030 Notre Dame Avenue (across from Brookside Cemetery). The service will be webcast through the Neil Bardal Funeral Centre website. NEIL BARDAL FUNERAL CENTRE 204-949-2200 neilbardalinc.com