

WAKE SERVICE

Wednesday, February 22, 2023
and Thursday, February 23, 2023
Church of the Messiah, Opaskwayak, MB

FUNERAL SERVICE

Friday, February 24, 2023 1:00 pm
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cathedral, The Pas, MB
Presider: Fr. Shantha Gandamalla
Music Ministry: Russell Cook Memorial Singers

INTERMENT

St. Michael and All Angels Cemetery, Opaskwayak, MB

RECEPTION

Church of the Messiah Basement

Very special thanks to the staff of St. Paul's Personal Care Home. Mom often spoke of nurse Mary – thank you Mary for brightening our mom's days. We would also like to thank the great staff at St. Anthony's Hospital: Dr. Carpenter, nurses Pat, Jace, Ashley, Kenzie and Jordan. And last, but certainly not least, thank you to our sister Leona who was mom's primary caregiver for many years. Leona worked tirelessly to ensure our mother never went without. She escorted her to her many eye and doctor appointments throughout the years. Leona was mom's advocate, our family spokesperson, and mom's New Year's date for several years.

Mom's great-grandfather, Doctor Josiah Young, practiced traditional medicine alongside western medical physicians. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Opaskwayak Education Services Otineka Mall, Hwy 10 North, Opaskwayak, MB R0B 2J0 to establish a bursary for health professional students studying the intersectionality of traditional and western medicine in a healthcare discipline.



Hemauer Funeral Home, The Pas, Manitoba

www.hemauerfuneralhome.com

Unauthorized copies will result in poor quality and are not the responsibility of Hemauer Funeral Home.



*In Loving Memory of
Victoria Cook*

(nee Grymonprez)

September 12, 1929—February 18, 2023



*“What is the good of your stars and trees,
your sunrise and the wind, if they do not
enter into our daily lives?”*

E.M. Forster

After a brief illness, our extraordinary mother who lived a life of faith, respect, unconditional love, kindness and integrity left this world in the early morning hours of Saturday, February 18, 2023 at St. Anthony's Hospital, The Pas, with family by her side. She was 93 years of age and was the last surviving sibling of seven brothers and sisters.

Mom grew up on the Grymonprez farm northeast of Bridge Road where her character and strong values were formed. Her parents instilled a strong work ethic in each of their children – one that our mother upheld throughout her long life. There were plenty of farm chores to be done on the homestead, which prompted our mom's need to work on the farm and forgo a formal education. While she had to relinquish her education outside of the home, she was extremely bright and was taught well by her parents. Due to her own situation, she went on to teach her own children that education was a great opportunity and not something to begrudge.

As children and then adults, we loved to hear the many stories mom had of her upbringing out in the country, where her immense love of the outdoors and nature began. She would share how their days began at dawn when they would have to tend to the cows, collect eggs from the hens, and participate in general upkeep of the barn and surrounding buildings. She would reminisce about heading out into the fields with their father and all her siblings early in the mornings while their mother stayed back to prepare lunch. Her mother would then meet them out in the fields and they'd enjoy a picnic of freshly prepared food, bannock and tea.

Life on the farm was not all work for the Grymonprez children. As my mom and her siblings reached adolescence, they once built a raft made out of branches and anything else they could find and ventured down the creek pretending to be explorers. She would share her sister Mary was the instigator! They only did this until they could hear the bells of the approaching horses, which indicated their parents were now close to home after a grocery visit to the town of The Pas.

Our mother left the farm at the age of 21 years to work at her first job at the Exchange Café where she met our father Frederick Silas Cook. She told how, as a waitress, she was carrying a tray of food when our dad flirtatiously held out his foot to block her way and as the saying goes, the rest is history. They married soon after, making their home at Opaskwayak Cree Nation, and began their large family until our dad's unexpected passing in August 1971. They were blessed with ten beautiful children, as well as raising grandchildren Darrell Cook, Les Michell and Wesley Cook whom they loved as their own. Mom also briefly raised granddaughter Shardell Cook, Brooklyn, Dylan and Richard Scott. They, and all her grandchildren, held a very special place in her heart.

After our dad's passing, our mother had eight children under the age of 18 who she raised on her own. With limited financial resources, we were very rich in other ways such as the unconditional love she bestowed on each of us, the work ethic she taught us, and a faith taught to us from an early age. Our mother was not formally aware of the seven teachings at the time, but we were always taught the values of love, humility, wisdom, respect, bravery, honesty and truth. She taught us to treat others as if it were our last; thereby never having any regrets.

Without our father, our mother in many respects had to serve a dual role. Christmases of past are etched in our memories with the annual trek out into the woods to chop down the perfect tree – one for the home and one to stand outside with a beautiful string of lights. She would haul out the ladder and install the festive string of lights on our home. She also adorned the house with wooden stars she made by hand. Her hard work and dedication often resulted in the local community prize of best decorated house.

She chopped wood for our wood burning stove, hauled water from the pump as we lived without running water, and washed clothes by hand. Outside of household and family chores, mom loved to sew traditional moccasins and did so until only a few years ago. Our sister Val inherited mom's sewing and beading talents and will now have mom's antique sewing machine to continue the tradition. Mother was a wonderful cook and we never went without. She enjoyed a diet of traditional foods and nothing ever processed. It was rare for mom to ever utter a negative word as she was eternally optimistic; however, after moving to St. Paul's Senior Centre, she would often describe the food as "disgusting" and we often brought meals of fish and other traditional foods to her, much to her delight.

With her advancing age, mom developed episodes of dementia and she was "reunited" with our dad. She would often tell us dad sang to her at night in her room. We would try and take our mother out for home visits periodically and last Christmas she declined this offer citing the extreme cold as her reason. The next day, as we brought her a Christmas dinner, she quietly whispered in our ear, "I'm sorry I didn't come home last evening, but your dad sings to me at night and I did not want to leave him here alone."

Victoria is survived by her children Gladys Richards, Valerie Cook, Karen Cook, Christopher Cook, Leona Cook, Darrell Cook, Les Michell and Wesley Cook and their spouses and families. Surviving Kookum are many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren and nephews and nieces too numerous to mention.

Victoria was predeceased by her husband Fred Cook (1971), infant baby (1963), Rose Sinclair (2002), Helen Laliberte (2011), Sarah Cook (2012) and James Cook (2012). She was also predeceased by parents Cyril and Sophia Grymonprez; brothers Cyril and Albert; sisters Sarah (Hilda) Carriere, Jean Lundmark, Elizabeth Zuk, Mary Laronde and Clara Lagace and their spouses/families; parents-in-law David and Helen Cook; brothers and sisters-in law Bill Cook, Solomon Cook, Jacob Cook, Blanche Constant and Lesley Cook and their spouses/families. Also predeceasing our mother were grandchildren Derek Constant, Courtney Lafreniere, Lisa Richards, infant Cyril Cook, Kelly and Barry Muswagon; and many nieces and nephews.

Mom, we thank you so much for the important lessons you taught us and for the incredible love you provided to each and every one of us. Your quick wit and wonderful sense of humor will forever bring smiles for us as we will undoubtedly think about you every day for the rest of our lives. Thank you for seeing the glass as always half full. As a result, you instilled in us the very significant characteristic of resilience, which has served us well over the years. And thank you for ending every phone call, every visit with "I love you."