

## Biography – Darlene (Carruthers) Caron – by David Caron

My mom was born in 1939, a third-generation Albertan. My grandma had come from Nottinghamshire when she was 3, and grew up in Drumheller, the daughter of a coal miner. Before dinosaur bones were discovered in Drumheller when my mom was a kid, it was the coal mines that drove its economy. My grampa was born in nearby Munson, the son of a blacksmith, whose family had moved from New Brunswick.

So mom grew up under that big blue sky, and whenever she was back around it again, I could feel her relax a little. She won awards for her singing and playing piano, and had lots of friends and family. Yet like most teenagers, she wanted more, and left to get her nursing degree at the Calgary General Hospital. It was a time she enjoyed a lot, and she loved going to the reunions with old friends. She came back briefly to Drum before she moved to Winnipeg where her Aunty Cec lived, to get her Operating Room post-grad specialization. Her nursing friend Betty, whose husband Norm was in the air force, introduced her to another RCAF officer, my dad. It was a torrid romance. They met on that blind date just after Valentine's Day, were engaged in July, and married in September. Laurie came the next year, and Leanne the year after. With the growing family, my dad got a job with Air Canada, and the family moved when Mom was 27 to Etobicoke. Two years later they moved to a larger house in Bramalea, with me just two weeks old. She worked there as a nurse, and got involved in theatre and other community work. And my parents did more travelling, something they always enjoyed.

When she was 35, we all moved to the house near Arkell, which Dad had designed. Again she worked as an OR nurse, at the Guelph General and St. Joe's, and got involved in the community with the Women's Institute and other things. She loved nursing, being part of a team helping people. She later moved into management roles at Guelph General, but that wasn't what she wanted with its particular politics. And when nursing with its

lousy hours wasn't the right fit for her life, now filled with teenaged kids, with her quiet determination, she earned her real estate license and sold real estate for a few years in the 80s. With Laurie and Leanne gone, we sold the house in Arkell, and we moved into Guelph. Two years later, after I was gone, she spotted a great deal on Forest Hill Drive because of her real estate work, and this became her and my dad's home for almost 30 years.

There she focused community: she worked with my dad at Kiwanis and later with Rotary. Lots of cooking. Lots of crafts. And later the fourth C, Cancer. But now I'm moving into what my sister Leanne will talk about. Her life was full of many other details, which we're happy to share at any time.