



Jean Mary Hartley

October 30, 1931 - May 4, 2022

On Wednesday May 4, 2022, Jean passed away peacefully at Parklands Clayton Park at the age of 90. Jean was born in Ilford, England and earned a BSc in chemistry from Imperial College, London. A spirit of adventure led her to emigrate to Canada to take a position in a commercial laboratory.

Realizing that she needed to learn to drive, a mutual friend arranged informal lessons with a dashing young English accountant at National Sea Products, who was “mad about cars.” Jean & Roger Digby Hartley, originally from Bristol England, were married and moved into a tiny basement apartment on Regina Terrace in South End Halifax.

Not long after they were married, Roger suffered a brain aneurism in 1963, which would prevent him from ever returning to his career. Knowing she was now the breadwinner, Jean proceeded to earn an MSc in inorganic chemistry from Dalhousie University which she completed in 1969. Soon after, she became one of the very first lay teaching faculty (not a Sister of Charity) of Mount Saint Vincent University.

She later moved into administration, becoming Registrar of the University. During her time as Registrar, she introduced the first computerized system in that area. She then moved to the department of continuing education, where she was Deputy Director and Director of Summer School for many years - a

complex and often thankless task that nevertheless had to be done exactly right, every year. She also recruited faculty for, and scheduled, all of the early televised courses and played a key role in the development of the DUET televised learning program. Her final position at The Mount was as Assistant Dean for Academic Advising.

In all her administrative positions, Jean was in direct contact with many, many students. They relied on her for good advice, and it was always delivered with her typical gentle kindness and concern.

Jean was also a woman of passion - music, birds, orchids, but not cooking. She brought her scientist's mind to her pursuit of exotic birds and cultivation of orchids. They weren't just beautiful flowers, they all had long Latin names and interesting histories. Jean knew them all.

Jean was also adventurous. When Roger's disability permitted, they took many trips together and later, alone, Jean visited Antarctica, circumnavigated South America, explored New Zealand and cruised through the arctic on a Russian icebreaker.

Jean's love of music, especially opera and most especially Wagner, led her to volunteer with Women for Music in 1996, serving as president from 2003-2005 and then as treasurer for many years. Her administrative skills were greatly appreciated as she helped organize the well-known book sales that raise funds for the Symphony Nova Scotia. She was a great supporter of the Symphony and had a great knowledge and love of music. She was given an Honorary Membership to Women in Music in 2016.

Although Jean's world shrank to her room and the gardens at Parkstone, the strains of a Wagner opera could often be heard coming from her room and she retained the liveliest interest in the world around her.

Jean was truly a quiet and unassuming inspiration - to the many students she helped, to the colleagues she mentored, to the orchestra she supported and to the many who felt her warmth and friendship over her long life.

When her father died, Jean dug up and smuggled back to Canada some bulbs from his bluebell patch. They thrived in her garden for many years and now their descendants thrive in a friend's garden, a perfect remembrance every spring.

Jean is predeceased by her husband on March 30, 2010, brother John Osborne and her sister-in-law Valerie Osborne. She will be missed by her niece, Claire Osborne (Ottawa) and her husband Alan Bent, Giles Osborne (Toronto, ON) and his wife Maxine Lewis and Mark Osborne (Dartmouth) and his girlfriend Adele Widgery. She will also be missed by her great nephews Graeme and Eric Bent (Montreal, QC), Ian Bent (Aylmer QC), and great-great niece and nephew Sofia and Luca Bent (Montreal QC) and Jacob Bent (Aylmer QC.)

A private cremation has taken place. A gathering to celebrate Jean's life will be organized in the summer. If you wish to remember Jean, donations to Symphony Nova Scotia or the Nature Conservancy of Canada would be welcome.

The family is grateful for the compassionate care given by the many health professionals who helped with Jean's continuing care over the past 5 years at Parklands Clayton park. Special thanks to Catherine Bent for all your help during the years. It was greatly appreciated by the family.

Tribute Wall

MS

“ I just learned of Jean Hartley's passing. During the 1980/1990s I worked in the office of the MSVU Deans and had great admiration and fondness for Jean with her kind and gentle persona. Rest In Peace Mrs. Hartley. Margaret Shiels



margaret shiels - June 17, 2022 at 12:26 PM

CK

“ I am so sorry for the loss of your beloved aunt. In 1994 I met Jean at a Nova Scotia Bird Society meeting and soon after she approached me and asked if I would take care of Roger while she went away on a world birding trip. I agreed and over the next 15 years Jean was able to take much needed breaks from her care giving role while I looked after Roger, the cats and the orchids. On her return she would invite me over for the best pork tenderloin! She was my go to person with her extensive knowledge of birds and we did many forays together. I thought theirs was the greatest love story ever and I was with her when Roger passed away at the QE11 in 2010. I loved them both dearly. She was a beautiful person.

Carol Klar - May 29, 2022 at 02:01 PM

LM

“ As a former MSVU student and long term faculty member, I have many pleasant memories of Jean. I also saw her when she first moved into the Shannex retirement living residence. As always she retained a positive outlook on life.

Linda Mann - May 26, 2022 at 03:46 PM

GB

“ I am so sorry for your loss. In the early 70's, Jean, as Registrar, made many accommodations for me. I was a single parent of three. She hired me part time in the office and adjusted my schedule in order for me to complete my degree. She was so pleasant to work with, one of the best “bosses” I ever had. I phoned her a few years ago and it was wonderful hearing her voice and chatting. May she Rest In Peace and May her memory be a blessing.

Georgina Bent - May 17, 2022 at 08:53 AM

WM

“ While Jean was still living in her home, my late husband (Bob) and I would often assist in filling Jean's bird feeders so she could continue to enjoy the many feathered friends that visited regularly. The tea pot was always ready after our cold winter task. Bob, a Mount Chemistry Prof, & Jean shared their stories of the many students who came through the Mount over the years. And more recently on our visits to Parkland, we often shared nature travel memories including one of her favourites, Antarctica, as seen in this posted photo. A life well lived.
Wendy McDonald, Halifax

Wendy McDonald - May 16, 2022 at 07:50 AM

SB

“ I was sad to learn of Jean's passing. I knew Jean from her time at MSVU and she will be fondly remembered by many former students and by colleagues. We shared a love of birds and always shared sightings when we ran into each other after Jean's retirement. I offer sincere condolences to Jean's family at this time of loss. Her work at the Mount and her work with Women for Music leave an enduring legacy. May she rest in peace.
Sheila Brown

Sheila Brown - May 16, 2022 at 07:27 AM

MS

“ So sad to learn of Jean's passing. I met her through Women for Music and shared many happy times with her volunteering at book sales and sorting books (I was in awe of all the books she had read!). I was also fortunate to be able to drive her to concerts when she no longer had a car and enjoyed listening to her comments on the way home.

She will be missed by many but hopefully the happy memories will help sooth the loss for family and friends.

Margaret Swift, Halifax NS

Margaret Swift - May 13, 2022 at 05:52 AM