



## Maureen Georgette Van Buskirk

October 15, 1933 - April 14, 2025

Maureen “Mo” Georgette McGuinness Van Buskirk was christened on October 15th, 1933, in Verdun, Québec, which, due to a clerical error, became her official birthday. Those that were close to her knew that she was actually born on October 8th. She gracefully departed this life on April 14th, 2025, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

She was predeceased by her mother, Hattie Couturier; father, Hubert McGuinness; stepfather, Don Canders; former husband and dance partner Don Van Buskirk; infant sister, Angela McGuinness; brother-in-law William Van Buskirk; sister-in-law Norma Van Buskirk; brother-in-law Rick Easley; nephew Derek Van Buskirk; son-in-law Terry Payne; son-in-law Paul Lawson; and many dear friends, who she lovingly referred to as her “angels”.

Left to celebrate her memory are her children Cathryn Van Buskirk, Karen Van Buskirk (David Howe), Don Van Buskirk (Sophie Pilipczuk), and stepdaughter Shauna (Roy) Peach; sisters Madlyn Easley and Cheryl (Carlos) Olaechea; grandchildren Kelsie (Morgan), Lindsay (Noah), Taylor (Brittany), Grace (Paige), Sam and Lucy; great-grandchildren Maisy and Tilly Mo; nieces Cheryl (Jim), Lisa, Jennifer (John), Victoria and nephews Kevin (Kim), Billy (Betty), Owen and Jason (Maureen).

Five foot two, eyes of blue, Maureen was known for her soothing voice and gentle way, but was also fiercely independent and a terrific force; her small frame concealed a stubborn and resilient power that could be unleashed on anyone foolish enough to underestimate her. She had a mischievous sense of

adventure and could be convinced to get into a little trouble, especially by her daughter Cathryn. Following in the footsteps of her own beloved Grand-mère, she was a wonderfully attentive grandmother, adored by her grandchildren, and became known to all as “Nana Mo”. She was not perfect; she was a whole complex person who loved her family deeply and always tried her best no matter what obstacles stood in her way. She cultivated a special bond with each of her children and encouraged them not to judge, but to aspire to be kind and forgiving.

Maureen lost her birth father at a very young age, but held fast to his memory and her Irish identity. In the convent boarding schools, where the Sisters called her *la petite Irlandaise*, she learned the beautiful penmanship that always delighted. Deeply connected to her French-Canadian roots, she loved to share stories about her early years in Québec and New Brunswick. She had an instinct for caregiving even as a child and ultimately became a registered nurse, proudly earning her cap and gown in 1955 with her classmates at the “new” Moncton Hospital. Some of her most rewarding years as a nurse were those spent working with teenagers at the Nova Scotia Hospital. Both in work and in life, she cared for others with a rare sense of compassion that remained a pillar of her personality until the very end. Having moved around extensively as a girl and later in support of her husband’s career, it was in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia that she felt most at home. Maureen loved to travel and had many adventures with her sister-in-law and kindred spirit, Norma. Their escapades took them across oceans, and they shared a joyous spirit of friendship. She loved animals and had a special fondness for wild birds, always eager to share with you the latest sightings at her window. Pets were cherished, her last and best buddy being her cat, Bob. She had a life-long passion for art that she expressed through painting, crafting and card making. She was a knitting and crocheting machine, creating mountains of hats, scarves, and blankets for her grandchildren. Empathetic and good-hearted, Maureen took pride in donating hundreds of her crocheted creations to charities that distributed them to children in need around the

world. She also shared her creativity through volunteer work in many Dartmouth schools, where she taught painting and crocheting. At home, she enjoyed years of hosting a small group of friends for regular painting sessions. Her love of the ocean was a common theme appearing in paintings of stormy waves crashing on rocks or soft sand and beachgrass, evoking summers spent on Prince Edward Island with her family. Even as she battled pain from arthritis - an immense loss for a crafter like Maureen - she was never deterred from making art, and instead found new mediums to explore. She was prolific in her artmaking to the very end and has left us with many treasures to remember her by.

Maureen led a spiritual life, believed in a higher power, and valued the power of love above religious formality. She spent years journaling and reflecting on her experiences and her role in this life. She was a work in progress, consistently self-reflecting and planning self-improvement. Until the very end, when asked what she was up to she would respond, "I'm just getting organized" or "I think I will go to exercise class next week". She has left us volumes of personal history, her innermost thoughts, that not only will we cherish, but will allow us to reconnect with her as we read them. She loved music, loved to dance, and was keen to teach anyone to jive so they could dance with her. She loved Elvis Presley and said more than once of Harry Belafonte: "I wouldn't kick him out of bed for eating crackers!" She had a sweet-tooth and could be caught sneaking a bowl of ice cream well before it was time for dessert (somehow, she was even able to extract the ice cream from the container without breaking the seal). She inexplicably always had a baked potato (or two) in the oven, waiting to be eaten (Never wanting anyone to be hungry, she would ask in her lilting voice, "Would you like a potato?"). Her unforgettable quick wit and spicy sense of humor might catch a stranger by surprise, but for those who knew her, this fun-loving spirit was what made her our Mo... Our sassy, funny, sharp, crafty, fierce, gentle, mischievous, kind, unforgettable Mo.

The family wishes to acknowledge and thank the staff at the Berkeley Gladstone, Northwood Manor Assisted Living, QEII Emergency, Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital and Arborstone Enhanced Care for exceptionally thoughtful care in her last years. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. According to her wishes, Maureen's remains will be cremated, and when the weather warms, the family will gather to take her on one last adventure (or perhaps a few). There will be no formal funeral, but we hope that you will remember Maureen in a way that is meaningful to you. Whether it be through prayer, song, dance, a connection with nature or a libation, know that Maureen would value your thoughts. Though we will miss her warm embrace, we are grateful that we were fortunate enough to be here with her. In her last days mom asked if she was good enough for heaven. You definitely are mom, we know you are in heaven...and we love you.

# Tribute Wall

LD

“ So sorry to hear of Maureen's passing. I remember watching her knit and she always had a beautiful smile and so easy to have a conversation with her. My deepest sympathies.  
*Linda*

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**Linda Dennison** - May 09, 2025 at 04:05 PM

SL

“ So sorry to hear of Maureen's passing. She was a good friend of my mom's (Grace Conway) my mom will see her in heaven. I have one of Maureen's crocheted Christmas ornaments and it is very beautiful, nice memory. RIP Maureen

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**Susan L'Abbe** - May 09, 2025 at 03:00 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of Maureen's passing. Her legacy is evident via her family and a testament to the love this woman carried in her spirit.. Taylor, Cathy, and Karen are in my heart that feels their heavy loss. Sending heartfelt condolences. Arlene McFadden

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**Arlene McFadden** - May 09, 2025 at 11:51 AM

AB

“ I met Maureen years ago and was graced with her patience, kindness and laughter (we had lots of giggles). I have some of her art work from when she started painting her famous mushroom. Sending thoughts and prayers to Kathy and Karen....and all other family.  
*Anne Blackler*

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**Anne blackler** - April 19, 2025 at 05:03 PM

KB

“ 46 files added to the tribute wall



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**Karen Van Buskirk** - April 17, 2025 at 12:44 PM