



Geraldine Marie Gamache

July 22, 1922 - April 28, 2020

.Geraldine "Gerri" Gamache, age 97, of East Wenatchee, WA, passed away peacefully at Argonne Adult Family Home on Tuesday, April 28, 2020. She was born in Pointe Saint-Charles in the city of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on July 26, 1922, to the late Alfred and Rose (Letellier) Sarrazin. She was born into a French-speaking family. Language was a political issue, so when it was time for her education, her parents enrolled her in the English school, where she was immersed in the English language. Gerri completed her education, bi-lingual, and excelled at math. She retained her math skills well into her later years.

There were distressing losses in her young life. An older brother died at the age of 19, from tuberculosis, and a younger brother, died at the age of two, from whooping cough. Through these losses, her family gained strength and resolve. Gerri was rock solid in a crisis and always there when you needed her.

Her life had fun times too. French Canadian culture is steeped in tradition with food, music, and family gatherings, especially during holidays. The women in the family would cook until the steam was running down the windows.

"Tortiere" (meat pie) was traditional at holiday meals. Families were large, but the dining area, not so much, so meals were served in several seatings. When one group finished eating, plates were cleared, and the next group started.

During the Depression Years (1929-1939), every family member pitched in to help. Gerri's first job was folding ladies' handkerchiefs at a nearby factory.

There were stories of lining the insides of shoes with newspaper to keep feet warm and passing a piece of bread quickly under a faucet to wet it, then sprinkling sugar on it for a treat. The times were tough, but they chose to be happy. Gerri carried this trait throughout her life, known for her smile, her laugh, and her good-natured humor.

For entertainment, she and her sisters, cousins, and girlfriends would take a streetcar to the nearby city of Verdun to go to dance clubs that played big band music. Gerri kept her love of dancing all the way into her 90's! She danced with her walker at her granddaughter's wedding. If she could stand, and music was playing, she would dance! Gerri never lost her fun-loving spirit. In September of 1945, Gerri was visiting her sister, Yvette, and her brother-in-law, Ambrose. Virgil, who was Ambrose's brother, was home on furlough from the Army Air Corps. When they met, things just "clicked" and they decided it was meant to be! Virgil proposed by letter and told her to send a "yes or a "no." Virgil said he was afraid he was going to get a "no," but the telegram arrived with the single word, "yes." They married in Montreal, Canada, on March 2, 1946, at St. Charles Catholic Church and made their home in Toppenish, WA, on the family farm called Sunshine Ranch. The city girl from Montreal adapted quickly, taking on the role of bookkeeper for the farm, cooking large meals, and raising seven children. The farm is still in the family to this day, now operated as VGF, Inc. by Virgil and Gerri's sons and grandsons.

Gerri enjoyed knitting, embroidery, and crewel work. Many of her children have afghans, knitted doll clothes, and embroidered tablecloths from Gerri's handiwork. She also loved cooking and entertaining. Gerri was known for her generosity, her hospitality, and being a selfless person that put her family first. Every fall, the family kitchen turned into an assembly line of pies and cakes for church bazaars and school fundraisers. Wintertime was for hosting holiday family gatherings, snowmobile parties, and one year, an impromptu ice-skating party, when the nearby gravel pit on the farm froze solid. Steve remembers, "That is the year we all got ice skates." Summertime was hosting

pool parties, 4th of July parties, and BBQs. She occasionally stopped the cousins working out in the fields on a hot day and invited them to come over to swim because it was "too hot to be working, they should be swimming." Swim time was usually followed by a platter of sandwiches.

Gerri was close to her sisters and the families stayed in touch. For several years, one sibling would spend the summer visiting another and their children grew up playing with their cousins and developing friendships that remain today.

Gerri was mindful of others and liked to see people enjoying themselves. She liked to go window shopping and, if she saw you admiring something, it might appear at Christmas or on your next birthday. She made sure to always include everyone. If a surprise guest came for Christmas dinner, there would be something for them under the tree.

After she and Virgil retired to Port Gamble, WA, she continued her knitting and needlework, and loved going to play Bingo with her sisters, nieces, daughters, and grandkids; anyone who was available to play. She had a supply of VCR movies, recent gossip magazines from the grocery store, puzzles and board games on hand, including dominoes. A round or two of "chicken-foot" after a meal was common, with the winner choosing a small wrapped prize from the gift basket. All of this would round out a walk on the beach or spending an afternoon being tourists in nearby Poulsbo, WA.

Gerri moved to East Wenatchee, with Virgil, in 2003, and was a member of Holy Apostles Catholic Church. Friends and family had wonderful things to say about Gerri. "She taught me it is better to give than receive and I try to model myself after her in that area." "I remember her laughter, the family dinners, and the fun." "I remember how she always made sure everyone was included and having a good time." "I remember she was a ruthless domino player." "She LOVED Bingo." "She was there when you needed her." "She was a master at finding new and unique gadgets, especially for the kitchen." "She kept her good humor to the end. Even in her last days she could crack a

one liner and make people smile." "Aunt Gerri always had a way of making things special."

She is survived by her children: Kenneth (Chris) Gamache of Yakima, WA, Bernard (Vicki) Gamache of Yakima, WA, Steve (Jocelyn) Gamache of Toppenish, WA, Barbara (Arnie) Bangs of Yuma, AZ, Paul (Trudy) Gamache of Selah, WA, Ray Gamache of Yakima, WA, and Arlene (John) Neal of East Wenatchee, WA. She is also survived by grandchildren: Nicholas, Jacquie, Allison and Andrea; Darren and Andy; Aric and Ryan; Michael and Katie; Patricia, Awndre and Crystal; and Daniel, Sarah, and Amanda; and multiple great-grandchildren. Also surviving is her brother, Fred Sarrazin, and sister-in-law, Theresa (Jerry) Wilton of Mount Angel, OR; and multiple nephews, nieces, cousins, and good friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Virgil; grandson, Jered Gamache; her sisters: Rose, Yvette, and Fernande; and her brothers: Rene and Fernand.

Memorial donations are welcome to Catholic Family and Child Services, 5301 Tieton Dr. Suite C, Yakima, WA, 98908, <http://ccyakima.org/>. Gerri's private interment was held at Terrace Heights Memorial Park in Yakima, WA, on May 6, 2020. Arrangements were by Chapel of the Valley, Wenatchee, WA.