

In Loving Memory of
**Helen Maxine
Hudson MacDonald**



July 12, 1947 - March 15, 2022

Helen Maxine Hudson MacDonald passed away quietly on March 15, 2022, in Okotoks, Alberta, from health complications. She was surrounded by family and love. Helen was predeceased by Sonny James MacDonald, her husband of 56 years, who passed away in April 2021. Helen is survived by three children: Thomas James (TJ) MacDonald, Marcy Blayne DeMond (nee MacDonald), James (Toko) MacDonald. A daughter, Tammy Lynn, was born in the early 1970s and passed away as an infant.

Helen was born July 12, 1947, in Fort Smith, NWT, where she spent the vast majority of her life. Helen was the daughter of Tom and Florence

Hudson. Helen had five siblings (all surviving): Ken Hudson, Tom Hudson, Dennis Hudson, Millie Hudson, Lisa Hudson. Family and friends were the cornerstone of Helen's life. She leaves 7 grandchildren, and 5 (soon to be 6) great-grandchildren, many cousins, nieces, nephews, and in-laws. And many, many Best Buds that were as close as family. Too many to list all. A blessed life, indeed. Some may remember Joan True, Marie Nicholson and Joan Mercredi. As she entered Kindergarten, she met her long-time buddy, Alberta Gladue-Moreau. Oh, the trouble those two didn't get into though the years.

Honourary Pallbearers are Alberta Gladue-Moreau, Stella Wasylshyn, Diane Maluorno and sisters Millie Hudson and Lisa Hudson. As Helen was caught saying "I carried them around long enough, now its their turn!" Fw: Obituary for Helen Maxine Hudson-MacDonald for Hay River Hub and News North 2 of 5 3/21/2022, 8:55 AM ** A celebration of life will occur in the future in Fort Smith (date has not yet been set). This will be a joint celebration for Helen and Sonny**

Born and raised in Fort Smith, Helen moved around to Saskatchewan and the NWT, over her lifetime (Fort Smith, Uranium City, Inuvik, Rae-Edzo, Prince Albert, Hinton, Fort Simpson, Hay River and Okotoks). In 1963, Helen met the man she would marry and spend her life of 56 years with! In 1965, she married Sonny MacDonald in Fort Smith. What an exciting 56 years this turned out to be!! For the first four years, they worked and travelled wherever they wanted to go. No children to take along, just a curly haired little dog named Piddles. In 1967, Sonny and Helen decided to move from Fort Smith to Uranium City, supposedly for one year. Oh, how times changed! They made lifelong friends, had so many good times and made very lasting memories.

The first few years were spent working here and there. Helen was not even old enough to go into a bar, but she worked in one! She had so much fun and met so many of the towns friendly neighbourhood characters. Many who became lifelong friends of Sonny and Helens.

During this time, Helen became the first female to work for a French outfit called Red Path from Quebec, who sub-contracted for Eldorado Mining. Here she learnt mechanics from a fellow nicknamed Kiwi from New Zealand, then decided to learn how to operate heavy equipment as well. She operated Muck Cars and front-end loaders in and out of the underground pit for the summer and winter of 1968.

By Spring of 1968, Sonny took a job with the Dept of Saskatchewan Highways in Stony Rapids and Black Lake area. So away they went again, this time Helen is going to cook for the crew!! Well, she did do that but also took advantage of a chance, not everyone gets to do everyday: she once again learnt from the best!! Her husband Sonny and his close friend, one of the best "Skinners" by the name of Len Gladu from Fort Chip. They taught her how to operate truck, grader, and Cat. So in between baking pies, cakes, and cooking suppers, she graded highways to Black Lake, cleared property around the bay much to the dismay of some pipesmoking Grannies that perched in front of the store keeping an eye on things!!

Between learning all this, shooting a few bears in camp, and ordering too much food, (that's another story) Helen and Sonny met a lot of the MacDonald-Mercredi relatives in Stony and once again made lifelong friends during their stay!

Helen is widely known for her work with the GNWT's Justice system, and for her contributions made through her long-time work with Friendship Centres. Her involvement as a Senator for the National Association of Friendship Centres allowed Helen to see all corners of the country, from sea to sea to sea, and every community – all 33 – in the NWT.

Helens other work involved the National Native Women's Association, where she served as a Board member for a number of years. It is through this work that Helen contributed to the adoption in the Parliament of Canada, Bill C-31, a bill in which native women regained treaty status. It allowed women who previously lost their Indian Status to regain their status, as well as their children's status. Bill C-31 came into effect in 1985. Helens political contributions also included serving on the NWT Status of Women Council; served as president of the NWT Native Women's Association in the 1980s, as well as served on the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission for 5 years, as a Counsellor assisting survivors. She got involved and she made a difference.

Fond family stories include Helen shooting a moose along the highway between Hay River and Fort Smith, wearing a fur coat no less! Or shooting a wolf on her front doorstep wearing a pink nightie, scaring the bejesus out of the kids! Or stopping along the highway to let her best bud take a pee break, only to turn her head and see a giant eye looking at her through the driver's window. It was a buffalo that had walked over to check them out! Or recalling the time that her mother, Florence, and Sonny and her were taking the winter road south, and along the ice road, they ended up in the willows! Uffda! was so excited, she leapt out of the car, not realizing that the car was sitting at nearly 90 degrees upright, and she fell headfirst into a bank of snow. Sonny managed to get out of the car, get around and grabbed Flo by her ankles to yank her up, and when Flo protested, Sonny exclaimed "Oh! I thought your skinny pegs were willows!"

Helen's greatest joys were her family, her friends, her Best Buds, and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And coffee. Helen was never long or far from a good cup of brew. And laughter. There was always lots of laughter. And the "occasional" gossip session.

The family ask that desired donations to be made to the Fibromyalgia Association of Canada.

Helen wanted to share one final thought with you:
Enjoy life and have a brew because Rome wasn't built in a day!

To email condolences or comments, please visit
www.snodgrassfuneralhomes.com

We ask that you share your stories about Helen in the comments section, so we can all have a smile, a laugh, and share a tear together.

Arrangements in care of Snodgrass Funeral Home (Okotoks).
Ph. 403-938-3111.