

It is with great sadness that the family of the late

*Loretta Elaine Abernethy*, age 81, of Yellowknife announce her passing on Tuesday, **November 29, 2022**.

Born on a small farm in Upper Linden, Nova Scotia on **May 19, 1941**, to Harry and Lillian Smith, Loretta grew up with a strong desire to help and support people. This passion led her to pursue nursing and midwifery as a career. Loretta graduated from the Moncton Hospital School of Nursing in 1962. She spent the next few years as an Obstetrics Nurse in Nova Scotia and B.C. before returning to school in Alberta to take an Advanced Practical Obstetrics Program. Following this she moved to Moose Factory where she spent a year as evening and night supervisor and was responsible for delivering many babies.

It is there that she met John Richard Abernethy. In 1966 Loretta and JR married and moved to Frobisher Bay (aka Iqaluit) where she worked as an RN and continued to deliver 100s of babies in the community and region. She also worked as a staff nurse, medivac nurses, public health nurse as well as on a research team studying ear infections in the north. Loretta spoke fondly of her time in Iqaluit and her experience there helped make her the well-rounded professional that many remember and love to this day. Iqaluit was also where her three children (DavE, Glen and Sue Sue) were born.

Later, in 1976 Loretta and family moved to Fort Smith, NT and then in 1978 to Yellowknife where she lived until her passing. In Yellowknife Loretta worked in OPD and as a relief evening supervisor. In 1980 she took the position of Patient Care Co-Ordinator. Many have said that Loretta's calm manner, nursing skill and above all sense of humour got the staff through many crises at the old "old hospital". Loretta left the hospital and joined St. John Ambulance where she was responsible for developing a film project promoting wellness and health lifestyles for the NWT's elder population.

In 1985 Loretta signed on as Homecare Co-ordinator where she was a driving force in creating and raising the profile and expanding Homecare services in Yellowknife and the NWT. Her work in this area was something she was very proud of. Loretta was a skilled administrator and an amazing RN. Her down to earth practicality, common sense, nursing skill, and, of course sense of humour sustained her staff and made it a real pleasure to work with and for her.

Loretta will be sadly missed by: her husband, John Richard "Dick" (SaSa) Abernethy; children David Abernethy (Tram Do) of Yellowknife, Glen Abernethy (Carolyn Smith) of Newport Landing, Nova Scotia and Susan Abernethy of Yellowknife; grandchildren Megan Vu, Hannah Vu, John Abernethy, Matthew Abernethy; honorary grandchildren Garrett Fyfe (Julia), Colton Fyfe and great grandchild Evelyn Fyfe; brother Mervyn Smith (Mary Esther) of Collingwood, NS; sister Dianne Harrett (Mike) of Oxford, NS and many uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

A celebration of life for Loretta will be planned for a later date (summer 2023). Until then her family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Alzheimer Society of Alberta & Northwest Territories – Yellowknife Office and Martha MacLellan for their education and support over the past 5 years as Loretta lived with dementia. Although Loretta had many memory and personality changes, she and her family are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the society that helped them all to enjoy music, laughter, and many stories and memories from earlier times. In lieu of flowers Loretta's family asks that you make a donation online to [Alzheimer.ab.ca](http://Alzheimer.ab.ca) or call (867) 669.9390 and leave a message.

