



Anne Delphine Columbe Enge

August 7, 1933 - April 4, 2010

Mother, social worker, teacher, Métis elder, legend - these are all words that describe the late Anne Enge. Anne passed away peacefully in the presence of her family on Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010, following a life marked by great personal and professional achievement. Anne's life began on August 7, 1933 in Fort Smith, NWT. The stories she told of her life revealed a childhood that was very difficult and unique, but it is likely what gave her the great resilience and strength that made her who she was. She was descended from two great Aboriginal families - the Mercredis and the Beaulieaus.

Her father, Eugene Mercredi, was a decorated war hero who worked as a trapper, a carpenter and delivering mail by dog team up the MacKenzie Valley. Her mother, Rosa Beaulieu Mercredi, raised Anne and her two siblings in a small house in Fort Smith, heated by a wood stove, with no running water. Anne had many stories about living on the land. Ironically, she hated camping and once remarked that she was mystified as to how spending time hauling water, chopping wood, cooking over a fire and sleeping on the ground could possibly qualify as a holiday.

Like so many Aboriginal children, Anne was forced to go to residential school at a very young age. Anne managed to overcome this painful experience and go on to do great things and touch the lives of many. Anne was the first Aboriginal woman from the Northwest Territories to graduate with a Grade 12 diploma. She went on to obtain a Secretarial Diploma from McTavish College in Edmonton and began her working career, initially as a stenographer in an office in Edmonton. Anne then met and married Bill Enge, Sr. in her early twenties and whilst moving all over the Northwest Territories with him, she brought her seven children into the world. The first two being born in Edmonton, the next two in Fort Smith, the fifth and sixth in Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) and the youngest in Inuvik. The family moved to Yellowknife in 1969. As if having seven youngsters wasn't enough, Anne worked in various positions within the correctional system, each having more and more responsibility, but she had ambition and admired the work of social workers. So, in 1977, Anne decided to pursue a university degree in social work.

Getting a degree is a formidable task for anyone. When Anne decided to do it, she was a single parent and an Aboriginal woman who had to move to a southern city because there were no degree programs offered in the NWT at the time. Had most of us been in her shoes, we probably would not have followed

through. Remember, it was 1977, a time when relatively few women were on their own and supporting a family, and many of the supports in place today to help mature students and single parents achieve their goal did not exist. Anne, however, was never one to shy away from a challenge and so she packed up the four kids who were still at home and moved to Calgary. Anne obtained a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Calgary in 1981. This was a turning point, not only in her life, but in the lives of her children.

Achieving a degree opened up many doors for Anne. She returned to the NWT and shortly thereafter entered management in the Department of Social Services, becoming one of the first Aboriginal women to enter management in the GNWT's public service. Anne's commitment to education also had a very positive impact on her children, who all value education and who have gone on to achieve great things in their own lives, both academically and professionally. A wonderful parent, Anne was very proud - and rightfully so - of each of her seven children, her seven grandchildren and her great-grandchild, Kayla. Anne loved her children unconditionally. She was there for them, as a mother, a teacher and a counselor. The walls and shelves of her home were covered with pictures of her loved ones. After they left the nest, she respected their independence, yet the door was always open if they needed help or advice, or even someone to just listen and be in their corner.

Another remarkable thing about Anne was her ability to converse about a wide variety of things. She was on top of all kinds of issues. She loved politics. She understood social issues and the root causes of many of them in a way that was rare. She read local and national newspapers voraciously and followed politics closely. She also dedicated a great deal of time to serving her community, most recently as a member of the YK #1 School Board and as a member of the board of directors of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority.

There was a lighter side to Anne, too. Anyone who knew her can attest to her delightful and mischievous sense of humour. It was hard not to laugh if she laughed. It was totally infectious. She brought character and levity to social occasions and made them that much more memorable. Her children and grandchildren often reminisce about the practical jokes she played on them through the years. Even in the last week of her life, Anne found the strength to make jokes and react to a good punch line.

Anne remarried on October 17, 2009. She married Charlie White, the love of her life. They were together many years and Charlie had been after Anne to marry him for most of that time. He was totally devoted to her. They shared many good times together and had the opportunity to travel to Mexico, a place that Anne loved very much. Charlie's devotion never wavered and in later years, as Anne became less mobile and her health started to fail he became her caregiver. Their love for each other was a beautiful thing.

If we had to choose one way to describe Anne, it would be "legend". She blazed many trails and inspired many to do the right thing, to be kind, and to serve our communities. She inspired us to get out there and make a difference. Perhaps most of all, she inspired us to take what life has handed us, move forward and be the best we can be.

Anne is survived by her husband, Charles White, the father of her children, Bill Enge, Sr., her sister, Maggie Kurszewski, her children, Melvin Enge, Brad Enge (Vicki Delpart), Susan Enge, Bill Enge (Launda Madsen), Arnold Enge (Karan Shaner), Audrey Enge (Paul Adkin), and Earl Enge. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Shelley (Jeremy Kerklaan), Mark, Lorraine (Michael Melenberg), Bethany, Nicole, Daniel and Janet, and her great-granddaughter, Kayla. Anne was predeceased by her parents, Rosa (Beaulieu) Mercredi and Eugene Mercredi, and by her brothers, Eugene "Manny" Mercredi. Her brother Richard Mercredi and sister Helen Mercredi predeceased Anne in their early childhoods.

The Enge family invites all those wishing to celebrate their mother's life to her funeral service at St. Patrick's Church in Yellowknife on Saturday, April 10, at 2:00 p.m. A wake/viewing will precede the funeral service from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the church. The funeral service will be followed by a burial at Lakeview Cemetery and reception at the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre. Education was very important to our mother. Please, therefore, in lieu of flowers, donate to the Anne Enge Memorial Education Scholarship Fund c/o the North Slave Métis Alliance, PO Box 2301, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7.

The Enge family wishes to thank Dr. Mansouri, Dr. Farrell, the Home Care nurses and aides, the nurses on the Extended Care and Medicine Units, Dan Stockton and Sheila Humphrey for their dedication in providing the excellent health care to our beautiful mother.



Mom, thank you for all of your wisdom, kindness, love and for all that you taught us, for making us laugh and for leaving the world a better place.

Your presence here will be greatly missed.