

In Memoriam

The Passing of a Grand Woman

Florence was born in Toronto into the era of the First World War, lived through The Great Depression, and with her husband, Lt Cdr William A. Graham (RCN, RN, RCNR) and four (soon five) children, survived the Second World War in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The family moved back to Toronto, did another NS stint followed by over 50 years based in Oakridge Acres, London. Losing her mother Nell at age 15 impacted her greatly: she dedicated herself to mothering, followed by first class grand and great-grand-mothering.

Having seen her children through the various levels of higher education, she returned to University (the University of Western Ontario) herself in her late 70s, graduating with a BA/Hons BA (but did an equivalent of an MA) in Philosophy. During these years, she worked in Veterans Affairs, was a member of the United Church, the Unitarian Fellowship (a dedicated choir member in both), and the Albert Schweitzer Society, followed by the Raging Grannies (add 'Reveling,' she always said) who sing protest songs for good causes.

On the environmental front, in 1962 she brought home Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, got involved in 'Pollution Probe' and The Coop Store. An active member of CFUW and the Oakridge Ratepayers Association, she never ceased doing public service.

She travelled widely to visit her children far and wide, and became a fond supporter of The Findhorn Community in NE Scotland (where she visited eight times).

Her favourite gatherings were her local weekly 'coffee group' with dear friends Pat Dinsmore and the late Evelyn March, her monthly book club with David Smith and friends—and of course good-spirited bridge parties!

Florence was, in essence, a grassroots philosopher who spoke her mind, whose search for 'truth' was unstinting. Her interests were both wide-ranging and breathtaking. Our family home, '540', was virtually an Open House for over 50 years, featuring notable parties, workshops and late night sessions. She brought the World into the Canadian suburbs and turned her backyard into a woodland wildlife haven. She represented the best Canada can boast of: A Grand Woman—not a 'lady', she said, that smacked too much of 'the aristocratic'.

Our world is less without her physical presence, but indeed, she walks tall amongst us in the best of Canadian life, what made us Canada from 1913-2009, and through her surviving children, Robert, Joan, Leona and Ralph—her darling youngest son Ian passed away in 2005—and finally through her grand-children Laura, John, Bruce, Nathalie, Kim-Ellen, Lila, Alex, Lara and Danny; and her great-grandchildren Gabriella, Garrett, Sean, Geordy and Charlton.

Fly high and free 'Sophia'-Florence, as you travel the heights with Socrates and Plato—and of course, the Great Sappho.

Cover photo courtesy of the London Free Press

Florence Boyd-Graham

Dec 22, 1913 - Nov 24, 2009

(Toronto, ON)

(London, ON)



Service at Mount Pleasant Cemetery Chapel, 303
Riverside Drive, London, Ontario on Friday,

A Family & Friends Board

Please feel free to share an impression about Florence, a word or two, a memory, a thought to pin to the board.



The Coffee Group



Florence (80's)



On the deck we sit and muse, mother's life passes by
An elegant old clipper with linen white sails
Her ship's log complete with the most minute details
Mixed with philosophical considerations
Portholes, escape hatches through which we wriggle
Mermaids tossed in gulf streams and oceans infinite
By Leona Graham (above photo with Florence in 1990)

Order of Service

John Graham

Lila Graham

Joan Doiron

Ralph Graham

Alex Graham

Gary Boyd

Final words and invitation to anyone in attendance who would like to share their memories, insights and stories of Florence.



The Four Agreements*

Be impeccable with your word

Don't take anything personally

Don't make assumptions

Always do your best

**** don miguel ruiz's code for life***