

## Ingrid's History

Knowing time on earth was short, Ingrid wanted to plan as many details as possible. This is a true testament to her strength of character and to her attentiveness to the needs of others. One day in June, Ingrid and I sat together at Mom's while she recalled memories and reflections of her life. I will always treasure these special times with my sister. Much of what I will share as part of Ingrid's history are Ingrid's own words.

Ingrid Grace Vegt was born on November 15th, 1966 in New Westminster, weighing 6lbs 7oz. as the second daughter of John and Florence. At the time, our parents only spoke Dutch at home and Ingrid and Erica didn't yet understand many English words. Unfortunately, Ingrid was quite sick as a toddler and was admitted into the hospital a few times. Back in those days, parents weren't able to stay with their children and Ingrid was left alone in the hospital. It was also challenging and scary for Ingrid as she couldn't understand the nurses. Due to this, our parents decided to switch to English only at home.

Ingrid has three sisters; an older sister, Erica and two younger sisters. Me, Yvonne and Monique. Our dad often teased that he was the luckiest man on earth as he had his own harem; a beautiful wife and four beautiful daughters. Growing up as girls, we played lots of Fisher Price dollhouse and Barbies. We loved making our own doll furniture with macaroni, Kleenex, cereal boxes and scraps of fabric. All we needed was a few glue sticks and some recycled materials and we were happy for hours. We didn't need TV, video games or expensive toys. We loved using our imagination to build stories for the little doll people. Our summers were spent swimming for hours at the community pool and getting dirty climbing trees in the forest across our street. We would be outside for hours until mom blew the whistle calling us for dinner. Other summer memories included family road trips to visit the hospitals so Dad could fix the cameras for his Baby Photo business.

Elementary School was a bit of a challenge for Ingrid as she was always one of the youngest in the class and not as mature as the other students. To her own admission, Ingrid seemed to spend a lot of time in the hallway for talking too much in class. Once she graduated from high school, she took one year to focus on piano to complete her grade 10 Royal Conservatory Music certification. My bedroom shared one wall with the piano. I actually loved hearing her practice and would often fall asleep to Ingrid practicing long pieces such as Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2.

After that year, Ingrid joined our dad in the family photography business. Ingrid talked about how special those times were as she loved spending time with our dad. Ingrid thoroughly enjoyed the work and developed excellent people skills and administrative skills.

Besides school, piano and work, Ingrid was active in church Young Peoples groups. She met Norm at a weekend Youth Retreat in Maple Ridge when she was 16 years old and Norm was 18. Ingrid shared with me how she had watched Norm from a distance as he interacted with others. She was immediately attracted to how he accepted everybody and how he was a quiet leader that inspired others. Ingrid and Norm slowly continued to build their friendship. Ingrid dated a few other young men in her late teens but soon realized that Norm was her 'forever one'. Ingrid told me that Norm always treated her like gold and made her feel so loved. It is funny even reflecting on that statement. I remember our dad often telling us, as his daughters, to hold out for a man who 'treats us like gold'. Ingrid and Norm were married on June 18th, 1988; ten months after their official first date. Norm was 23 and Ingrid was 21 years old.

In Ingrid's words, "the past 34 years have been filled with the usual ups and downs of married life but I can honestly say that it's been the best

34 years of my life. Norm's gift of 'helps' shines through every day, not only to me but to many others. Thankfully, he enjoys cooking as he has had to take over the majority of the cooking for the last year and half."

Ingrid and Norm were blessed with three children, first a son, Jacob, and then two daughters, Esther and Hannah. Ingrid and Norm were also now blessed with a daughter-in-law, Julia, and a son-in-law, Tim. In Ingrid's words, "Each child is unique and holds a special place in my heart. I always think of Jacob's easy-going nature and his gentleness. Esther has a determination and a boldness to stand up for what's right. Hannah's caring, loving attitude towards others comes out daily. Julia has always been super supportive of Jacob as he studied and grew in his career. Tim compliments Esther with his calm, reassuring nature. I was so excited to hear their news that they are expecting twin girls.

Being a stay-at-home mom was a difficult transition for Ingrid as she loved her career. But she truly appreciated the time with her family and how it allowed her to be a part of her children's daily lives whether that was watching the kids dig a deep hole in the family vegetable garden, reading many stories, swimming in the pool or camping. As sisters, we so appreciated Ingrid's willingness to care for our own children, alongside her own. Ingrid was a caregiver to several of her nieces and nephews through the years and always loved each one as her own. We were so grateful that Ingrid so graciously opened her home and her heart to our children when we needed a helping hand or a caregiver.

During this time in Ingrid's life, she welcomed the opportunity to serve on the Worship Band at church through singing and adding percussion. She also thoroughly enjoyed helping out in the Alpha Program, meeting new people and encouraging the growth in faith of the attendees. Ingrid talked about the deep friendships she developed with so many of you at Burnaby Alliance Church, The Rock Church, and New Westminster Christian Reformed Church.

Once her last child graduated from high school, Ingrid had itchy feet to work again. Without knowing what that looked like, she began volunteering at Massey Theatre, the 2010 Olympics and other local organizations. It became apparent that Ingrid had the skill set to motivate people and to lead by example. Ingrid's kids always teased her that she had a stamp on her forehead that said "talk to me" as she loved interacting with people. I think she got this trait from our dad. With her cheerful and calm disposition and her need to work with people, Ingrid started working at the Anvil Centre and the Massey Theatre as a 'Front of House' staff member. Within a short time, she moved into a management position. It gave her such joy to listen to the needs of the clients and the staff and to find ways to meet those needs. Forever friendships were formed there as well.

In the fall of 2020, Ingrid started to notice a few different things with her body. First, she had trouble emptying her bladder, then she started to notice her abdomen was growing larger and larger. December 24th, on Christmas Eve of 2020, she finally went into the ER as she was unable to empty her bladder at all. Given it was over the holidays, she wasn't able to get the required tests until early January. On Jan. 5th, 2021, Ingrid had her first CT scan at Lions' Gate Hospital. This scan showed a 16cm tumor on her right ovary.

On March 8, 2021, Ingrid had major surgery through BC Cancer Agency. She felt so blessed to have such an excellent surgeon. This surgery was much more complex than anticipated; and when the doctor was operating, she found that some of the tumor with the cancer cells had burst and that the cancer had spread to the omentum. The doctor had to remove a lot more tissue than expected but was able to save Ingrid's bladder and bowels. Post-surgery, the doctor shared the awful news that Ingrid had Stage 3 clear cell ovarian carcinoma, which is a pesky

kind of cancer. The surgeon was optimistic that chemotherapy could put the cancer cells to “sleep”.

Ingrid had her first chemo treatment on April 29th at Squamish General Hospital. The three nurses and doctors in the oncology department at Squamish General Hospital were amazing. Ingrid often described how this unit felt like a family that would hug and cry with you. Ingrid was extremely grateful for the love and care she was shown throughout this journey. It was a blessing to be in a small town with such personal care at the hospital and the local health care providers.

Chemo continued on and off for the next year. The side effects were tough to deal with but Ingrid had tremendous support at home from Norm and amazing family and friends. Even throughout the chemo, cancer continued to spread. On June 23rd, 2022, in consultation with the Squamish oncology team, palliative care and my family doctor, Ingrid decided to stop the chemo altogether to be able to focus more on quality time with family and friends without the nasty side effects from the chemo.

Knowing Ingrid’s time here on earth is shortened, we as a family, have been making great memories going through photos, laughing about our childhood and reminiscing about our lives.

When I was pondering on what I would write to add to Ingrid’s account of her life, I reflected on her spiritual life and on the spiritual gifts she demonstrated. In the Bible, in the book of Romans chapter 12:6-8 we read “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...if it is encouraging, let him or her encourage, if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him/her give generously...” Like our dad, Ingrid had the gifts of encouragement and looking out for others. Even in her final months and days, she would look for little ways to encourage all of us, her family & friends. God gives us spiritual gifts to show love to others

and to draw others to Jesus. God equipped Ingrid with the skills and calling to encourage others with a friendly smile, a kind word or a strong hug. Ingrid made use of every opportunity to be a blessing to others and was very intentional about building relationships. I know she would like to challenge each of us to allow God's power to transform our own hearts and to seize every opportunity to be a blessing to someone.

Ingrid wanted to leave you with her final parting words and asked me to tell you the following:

- First, Love everyone
- Second, see people as God sees them; as His creation
- Third, it doesn't matter who they are, love them as your own

Ingrid says, "Much love to you all. It is my prayer that you all find Jesus and allow yourselves to be transformed. God bless you all!"