



In loving memory of Mae Wesley

Born May 8, 1935

Passed Away August 16, 2023

Service of Remembrance

**Regina Funeral Home and
Cemetery**

**4001 East Victoria Avenue, Regina,
Saskatchewan**

**Monday August 21, 2023 at 2:00
p.m.**

Officiating: Reverend Jo Mader

Musician Tom Magnuson

Eulogist: Brenda MacPherson

Reader: Darren Howden

Urn Bearer: Brent Wesley

**Reception: Regina Funeral Home,
Arbor Room**

Interment: Regina Funeral Home

and Cemetery

The Obituary, and the Eulogy by Brenda Wesley-MacPherson follow:

Obituary:

Mae Wesley was born on May 8, 1935 and passed away peacefully at Wolseley Lakeside Nursing Home on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at the age of 88. She was predeceased by Harold, her loving husband of 51 years, Harold Wesley; parents, Andrew and Pearl Howden; parents-in-law Joe and Lena Wesley; son Bill; son-in-law, Randy Fyffe; brother Malcolm Howden; brothers-in-law Les Willette, Bob Reece, Joe Ash and Ron Wesley; sisters-in-law Joyce Wesley and Thelma Reece, niece Leanne Levis (Ash) and nephew Jim Willette. Mae is survived by her daughter Brenda (George) MacPherson of Edgeley, Erin (John) Scrivens (Andrew, Matt and Lauryn), David (Tricia) MacPherson (Elle, Brie, Sean and Kate), Megan MacPherson (MacKenna and Brianna); daughter Roberta Fyffe of Leduc, AB, granddaughters Kayla (Kris) Erhardt and Tara (Colin) Andrews; great grandchildren Emry, Jaxten and Declan Erhardt, Aiden Andrews; son Brent

(BobbyJo) Wesley of Regina, and grandsons Bill Wesley and Dawson Morin; as well as her sister Norma

Ash of Regina, brother Bob (June) Howden of Fort Qu'Appelle; sisters-in-law Carolyn Howden, Saskatoon and Marg Willette, Regina; as well as many special nieces and nephews and extended family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Mae's memory to: CNIB Guide Dog Assistance Fund. Family and friends are invited to leave tributes at www.reginafuneralhome.ca.

Regina Funeral Home & Cemetery by Arbor Memorial
www.reginafuneralhome.ca

Wesley, Mae, 1935-2023, Eulogy by Brenda Wesley-MacPherson

August 21, 2023

Before I begin, please let me be very clear that Mom and Dad were married for over 51 years and it was a complete oversight on our part that Dad wasn't mentioned in the Leader Post obituary. It has been corrected.

Thank you to each of you for coming here today to help us celebrate Mom's life. Pearl Mae Howden was born on May 8, 1935 to Andrew and Pearl Howden, the eldest of four, the family would later welcome her sister Norma, and brothers Malcolm and Bob. Mae married Harold Wesley on December 28, 1956. Their marriage was blessed with four children, Bill, me, Bert and Brent.

Mom's beginnings were pretty typical of the times. She grew up on the family farm north west of Edgeley in the district of Donamar. Mom loved living on the farm. She loved helping Grandpa outside and in the field until the boys were old enough and strong enough to take over. Those formative years were precious to her. She often spoke of being grateful that she grew up in a time when small communities were tight knit and neighbors were those good friends that you could always count on for help, fun and entertainment. As the oldest in the family, Mom would have many opportunities to flex those budding leadership tendencies. Norma, Mal and Bob might have called her bossy, but that didn't bother her. In 1949, the Howdens had the big house moved onto the farm. While Grandma and Grandpa were at Uncle Tom and Aunt Laurel's wedding, Mom got her three younger siblings organized and together they moved their belongings from the old house to the new house. I can't imagine she asked them to help. I'm pretty sure it was just expected. Growing up,

we spent a lot of time with Mom's siblings and our cousins. It was always an easy visit packed in with a whole lot of fun.

Mom would first leave home for Grade 11 and 12 at Scott Collegiate in Regina. She spoke of "light housekeeping" to pay for her room and board and returning home by train to Edgeley on the weekends. She would attend a year of Teacher's College in Moose Jaw and begin her teaching career at Fair Play School, south of Indian Head in the fall of 1954.

After marrying Dad, her adventures began to gather a little steam, and it certainly wasn't because Dad was the adventurer. Mom truly had a gift for taking a tiny seed of thought and running with it. It never occurred to her that her vision was ridiculous or over-the-top, she just made it happen and she convinced an awful lot of people along the way that it was a great idea!

After Bill was born, she decided to stop teaching and be a stay-at-home mom. One little baby was not nearly enough to keep her busy. She took in boarders and babysat kids during the day to fill her time. Back then, high school students came to the city for Grade 11 and 12. Mom and Dad opened their home to many area students so that they could complete their education. I have no idea how those decisions were made, and I'm pretty sure that my dad didn't necessarily realize what was going on, but I do know that at one point Mom had fourteen boarders, some students and some working a first job, probably for the Department of Highways, living in our tiny home at 1449 Retallack. If you asked her where everyone slept, her response was, "standing up in the corner". Honestly, that could have been the truth! She spoke of baking bread every other day and going through 100 lb. bags of flour in very short order. Feeding 14 young adults along with your own family seems like an insurmountable task. I think about that now and wonder why on earth would she do that! Not Mom, she would think, why wouldn't I? It was fun. Those boarders would go to work or school, and Mom made sure everyone did their homework. The tutoring began in that tiny little house, and her belief that every one of those kids would succeed, never ever left her. We moved to 6th Avenue North in 1964. Eight or nine boarders came with us. I can only imagine how happy they were with our new home. There was probably room for them to have a real bed.

In 1968, the tutoring took on a new life. Dad came home and announced that he needed to complete his Grade 12 in order to seek promotions at his Dept. of

Highways job. No problem. Mom would tutor him through the Correspondence courses. Why would you spend time with one adult, when so many adults at that time were in the same predicament? In the fall of 1969, Mom had 15 adults coming to our home, three nights a week to work on their Grade 12 courses. I have very clear memories of us going downstairs to kiss Mom goodnight.

Mom never, ever stopped tutoring. No one was turned away. She would keep the most ridiculous hours to squeeze someone in at her table. She just somehow made it work. Many adult upgrading courses would follow over the years, and everyone who stuck with it got their academic Grade 12 standing. I have often wondered how many people "graduated" from Mae's high school. I know how proud she always was of each and every one of them and she basked in all their future successes.

For about 20 years, Mom's teaching career was really at home as a tutor, along with a little subbing in Fort Qu'Appelle and some time at Parkland College. After Brent left home, she found herself with a little free time, so at the age of 55 she decided to finish her education degree. She took a look at her job prospects in Fort Qu'Appelle, and although Math was her forte, she determined that French was her best option. A French minor it was. She started full-time employment in 1991 and retired in 2001. She returned to subbing and kept up with the tutoring for many years into her retirement. She was still subbing and tutoring long after I retired. She took her tutoring books with her to Green Falls Landing, but I don't believe she tutored anyone after leaving Fort Qu'Appelle. On a side note, last week I asked Mom to factor a trinomial equation in her head. She had it sorted out almost before I finished the equation.

Many of you are here today because you were involved with Mom in some way or another in one of her many volunteer endeavors. At first, Mom's volunteering followed our interests, or at least that's what we believed. Bill joined the Regina Lions Band. We all followed. Mom became the uniform chairperson, travel chaperone, standby barber on haircut inspection nights and band Mom to everyone. We loved to host "band parties" in our basement. Our house had become the "go-to" hangout spot if no one else was having a party. Our friends, more often than not, would end up upstairs with Mom, playing cards and having a good laugh. She treasured many of those lifelong friendships. Mom had the opportunity to renew her relationship with Bob Mossing when her grandson, Billy, and Brent joined

the Mossing School of Music. On her 80th birthday, Mom once again donned a uniform and marched in a parade with the band in Williston, ND.

Mom's involvement with Girl Guides started when Bert moved up to Guides. The Girl Guide company she started with five other mothers boasted 50 girls and they were a seriously active group. Mom decided it would be a lot of fun to go camping in Grandpa's pasture. She convinced the dads to dig them a latrine pit, build them a "three-seater" and leave their wives and daughters out there on the prairie for a week of good fun. Sleeping in army bell tents, cooking over open fires with no water or power, it was really roughing it. When I look at those pictures, I just shake my head and think, "Who thought this was a good idea?" Mom did, and the girls are all smiling ear to ear, so I guess they had some fun.

After Mom and Dad moved back to the farm in 1980, Mom took Brent to church and she became a Sunday School teacher at the Edgeley United Church. The program required a projector but there was no money for the purchase. The money was raised through a Walk-a-thon. It was very successful and they had some fun doing it. The projector was purchased and the youth decided they wanted to continue as a group for all ages. The Edgeley Youth Group was formed and my sister, Bert, was one of the charter members. Mom's involvement with the Duke of Edinburgh program dates back to 1973 when there wasn't even an office in Regina. Mom introduced the Duke of Edinburgh program to her youth group kids and over the next 30 years countless members were awarded bronze, silver and gold awards because Mom believed the program offered so many great opportunities and helped the youth realize some of what they were truly capable of.

The Edgeley Youth Group was active from 1980 - 2012. Mom believed they should work hard and play hard. The term "voluntold" has been batted around by many of her youth group members for years. Mom had a unique way of presenting a suggestion to you that clearly only had one answer. We're going to clean the ditches and then we'll be going out for bowling and pizza. We will meet at 10:00. We're going to clean the garbage dump and then we'll head into the city for laser tag. We are leaving from my house at 11:00. Who could refuse?

The Edgeley Youth Group got involved with Northern Ireland exchanges after two young men came to Edgeley to complete their gold expedition. I'm not certain how many times a group crossed the Atlantic, but I do know that there were many youth group members that had a lot of fun on those trips. After the exchanges

came to an end, the youth group traveled to Hawaii, the East Coast on a bus tour, and the infamous Bahamian Island "cruise" trip. Somehow, Mom convinced Bert and Randy that they should let Kayla, then 13, travel with the youth group to the Bahamas. The group were to travel between islands on a postal cargo boat. I don't believe they were quite prepared for the adventures that awaited them, but Kayla and the rest of the group have some wonderful memories of a crazy trip. Mom had the youth group involved in so many community activities. Tara will remember going to Echo Lodge for wheelchair walks and pet shows with the residents. When Bingo was a thing in town, you could find Mom and her youth group members and their parents at the hall on a regular basis.

In 1985, Mom decided that Brent needed something more of a musical challenge. She contacted Tom Magnuson, and the Edgeley Jazz Band was formed. Every week, Tom came out from the city and the kids arrived at the hall for band practice. Long after Brent left home, Mom and Tom carried on with the Edgeley Jazz Band and later the choir. I think they stayed together for over 20 years, giving kids in the area a little musical instruction along with a whole lot of fun.

In her retirement, Mom decided the Fort Lions club would be a great place to exert some of her efforts. The Lion's motto is, "We Serve" and Mom served. She wasn't the one leading the organization, but she was always involved and organizing their projects and events. Mom was a very proud Lion!

There are many more causes and organizations that Mom was involved in over the years. She led a 4-H club, she helped at the Edgeley Community Centre, the Edgeley Curling Rink and the Edgeley United Church. She helped organize reunions, suppers, parties and dances. Mom received many accolades in her lifetime for the countless hours she devoted to volunteering. We have brought a couple here today, which would upset her greatly. She never did any of it for recognition, she did it because she believed that we all share a responsibility in helping to build good citizens and make our communities stronger through working together.

In her spare time, Mom used to love to sew. She made all of our clothes when we were little. She made numerous wedding, bridesmaid and grad dresses. She did ceramics and gave lessons in our basement. She would pick up knitting when she sat down stitching together a siwash sweater for a new baby on the way.

The fun. Mom loved fun.

She loved parties. She loved to organize parties. She loved parties with kids. She loved parties with adults. There was no bad time to have a party. Mom helped organize cabarets, card parties, mock weddings, skits, strawberry socials, foul suppers and weddings. She had a go-to list of party pranks that she loved to share. Young or old, she'd invite you to play those crazy games and throw her head back laughing when she "got ya". She was a master with a needle and thread. Often, as a tour chaperone, Mom would be involved in doing laundry for whichever group she might be travelling with. She delighted in sewing one pant leg shorter than the other, or sewing the fly down on some unsuspecting young man's pants. Mom found great joy in sharing laughter and fun with those in her circle.

Mom devoted many hours to playing cards. She played Bridge, Crib, Whist and Canasta. She enjoyed 65, Chase the Ace, 99 and Go Fish with little people. In her later years, she thoroughly enjoyed an evening of cards with her friends in Fort Qu'Appelle. At a moment's notice, they were gathered and the cards were dealt. A splash of rum, a pot of coffee, fresh or microwaved, would make the evening perfect. She was with friends and that made it fun. We played a lot of Crib with her in this past year. A nurse in Indian Head walked in and found Mom and I cutting for first Crib. She said, "Don't you give her first Crib?" I said, "Are you kidding, she'll skunk me with her eyes closed, if she can!"

How about Mom and her phone? Oh my! My mother loved to talk on the phone. Can you imagine being on a party line with my mom? The MacPherson family survived the experience, but were very grateful when private lines came in. Before cordless phones and cell phones, Mom was tethered to her phone by that ridiculously long cord stretched to the max throughout the house. She could do almost anything while she was on the phone. Cordless phones and cell phones were a blessing for her. She never left her room without them. She couldn't stand to think she'd miss a call. The ever-changing landscape of technology was hard on Mom. She was great with a landline and could remember a phone number if she dialed it twice. She swore at those cell phones. They took valuable moments away from her visiting and Facebook was another whole matter - until she got her own account. She LOVED to see what everyone was up to and she loved to share whatever she liked. Try as we might, she never caught on to "liking or loving" someone else's post, she just shared it and she didn't really care that there was another way to react. Mom's right hand quit working in the past year, not that she mentioned it to me until months after the symptoms started. She couldn't really scroll anymore, but on her last birthday

in May, she was delighted to sit and listen to all the greetings from her friends. We read through them more than once.

Mom did not approve of unnecessary doctor visits. She always proudly proclaimed that Brent was 32 years old when she went for her post-natal checkup. Mom enjoyed very good health in her lifetime. She did not suffer the regular aches and pains of aging and it allowed her to carry on doing her "Mae" stuff for many, many years. Mom had a bout of Covid in March. I spent about five days in her room with her as she recovered. I said to her one day, "Mom, can you believe you're going to be 88 on your birthday?" That little bit of nothing, laying in the bed, frail as a feather said, "Yup, and I'm still healthy!" I looked at her and thought, well, healthy might be a stretch, but you're doing all right. Mom was in Hayes Haven before she spent a month in Indian Head hospital and two weeks in the Wolseley Nursing Home. When we would ask her if she was in pain, she'd screw up her face and say, "In pain? From what?" I had to trust that she was telling us the truth. As she progressed through the last year, in the care of some very incredible people, her wicked sense of humor and her repertoire of one liners left many of her care givers thinking, "did she really just say that?"

As we started to go through old photos and albums for a video tribute, we were reminded once again about how Mom absolutely hated to have her picture taken. I'm not sure why that was, but honestly, we just stopped ourselves and said, "What are we doing? Mom would not want this!"

We shared her with all of you, but there also was time for us.

Mom loved to have people around her. When it was time for us, she liked to gather people. The more the merrier! She didn't fuss much about her house, or preparing a fancy meal. There was always a spot for you at the table and you left with a full belly. The visiting and the time spent together was what was important.

She was Auntie Mae to many, by blood and by choice. I believe "Auntie Mae" was quite a bit of fun. Whether you were visiting at our home in Regina, or later you made the trek to the farm with your own kids in tow, Auntie Mae loved when you made time in your life to come for a visit. She loved to make time for you. Whether she was teaching you to sew, do ceramics or tutoring you, Auntie Mae loved being with you. She loved to sit down for a game or take you out to the barn to check on

Uncle Harold's livestock. Whatever it may have been, know that her day was brighter spending it with you.

With the arrival of grandchildren, Grandma knew a brand-new kind of joy. She was thrilled to have Kayla and Tara in her home, playing dress up and baking cookies. Grandma stayed on top of their activities and achievements and never turned down an opportunity to go see them in Alberta. She was happy to dance at their weddings as we welcomed Kris and Colin into the fold. Her world took on new purpose when Billy came to live in Regina with Brent. She made every excuse possible to head into the city to be with her boys. After all, they were all boys in that house, of course they needed her guidance. That didn't really slow down until BobbyJo and Dawson found their way into our world. It was clear that Brent was happy and her boys were being cared for. She was quick to accept every invitation to come to the farm when our grandchildren were visiting. When her great grandchildren started arriving, Mom was happy to have them on her knee, reading stories and reciting her little hand games and songs.

Mom was forever pragmatic about life's ups and downs, but nothing knocked her for a loop like the loss of our brother, Bill. Although she got pretty good at hiding it, I believe she grieved his loss until her very last breath.

As mothers know and will tell you, they love their kids equally, but some are just easier to raise than others. They say that mothers and daughters can have a rocky relationship through those teenage years. If that's true, I believe I was about 57 when I left my teenage years behind me. This is a true story: in Grade 9, Mom tried to show me a quick and easy way to do my Math. I wasn't having it. I went to school and flunked the exam on purpose. I came home with a bright red F on my report card and said, "There, now will you leave me alone?" Mom never tutored me again. Mom and I argued fiercely, disagreed passionately and had each other's back always. Over the past six years, we got it together. I am forever grateful that we were blessed with this time. As Mom's circle closed in and her world shrank, we found ourselves in a relationship that we both treasured.

Did Mom have a crowning achievement? Could I name her most treasured volunteer experience? Not a chance! Her crowning achievements were her family first, the friends she collected, the fun she had and the memories she left behind. Each and every one of you that let Mom into your life, made her life richer. In the last few days, I have heard many people say that they wouldn't be who they are today

without Mae Wesley. I say, thank you, because she couldn't have been Mae Wesley without each and every one of you. She loved being with all of us. She would not have traded it for anything!

She was a lot of things to a lot of people, but to us she was just Mom.