



Violet Mary Donnelly

December 16th, 1922 – March 27th, 2012

*A tribute to Violet by her granddaughter, Kristen Andrews,
presented on Saturday, March 31, 2012 at St. Margaret's*

First let me start by introducing myself, I'm one of Violet's seven grandchildren, Kristen. Grandma and I have always had a close relationship, built on weekly visits to the Innisfil house to see Grandma and Grandpa. Our relationship grew the most over the years of 1991 to 2007 as Grandma moved in with my Mom (Reina), Evan and I. Everyone here that knows me understands that I am a fairly strong woman and like my Grandma I have a lot of courage, and to be perfectly honest I almost never stop talking. When I piped up saying that I wanted to speak at Grandma's funeral, some of my family found strength through me and asked me to share some things they'll always remember about Grandma.

Aundi is the eldest grandchild and for a lengthy period was the only grandchild. She vividly remembers talking many trips with Grandma and Grandpa in their big old van and one time dropping her toothbrush down the sink at their house. Grandma had scolded Aundi telling her to be more responsible but Grandpa wasn't too concerned as they could just buy her a new one. It probably wasn't that Grandma was angry at Aundi for this, just that she was a very frugal woman (which I might add served her quite well in her 90 years)! Lindsay remembers that Grandma had a variety of colourful hats that she wore all the time and for every occasion. She also recalls how much Grandma encouraged us to enjoy the arts. She was always taking us to shows; sometimes they were major productions like "The Phantom of the Opera" in Toronto but most often they were small amazing shows in Cookstown of "Annie Oakley" or "Oklahoma." Aunt Laura and Lindsay retell a time when my Mom had taken us kids and Grandma to one of our favourite places on earth: Wonderland. They say we'd left bright and early for our exciting day out and at 8 o'clock in the evening Aunt Laura started thinking "okay maybe they should be home soon" but then 9 o'clock and 10 o'clock rolled by. Aunt Laura was soon in full on worry mode wondering where us kids, Reina and Grandma were. We didn't make it back to Phelpston till midnight as we'd made it a full day of fun and stayed till it closed. Grandma was very much the adventurous type and if there was fun to be had you could count her in ALWAYS. Grandma wasn't just adventurous she was also big into travelling and constantly experiencing new things. Her and Grandpa travelled lots together before Grandpa died to places like Western and Eastern Canada, Texas, Florida and England. And after Grandpa passed Grandma kept going out and exploring the world in places like Spain, Tunisia Africa, Costa Rica and England some more. Jordan remembers Grandma telling us about the time she travelled to Costa Rica when she was 78 years old. She went on a rafting voyage there to see some crocodiles, and if that wasn't risky enough

they ended up in Nicaraguan territory. Well our Grandma wasn't afraid of a few rebels with machine guns; she paid them \$20 and continued on her journey! As I've just explained Grandma was adventurous and gutsy but she was also very responsible. No matter what country she was in she always had some local currency in her back pocket for emergencies, which one day proved to be very lucky for one of her grandsons. The whole family planned a trip to the Dominican Republic for Grandmas' 80th Birthday and at the last minute Dale broke his leg and he and my Mom had to use their cancellation insurance and stay home. Well, if Grandma wasn't so responsible and didn't always have some back up emergency cash, my brother Evan would have had to learn Spanish in a hurray and would likely be a citizen (or prisoner) of the Dominican Republic to this day! Grandma was also an avid birder and Jordan used to take Grandma out on his 4-wheeler back to the marsh in Phelpsston to look at the swans. It was really something to see your brave Grandma clinging onto her grandson as they sped down the dirt road, and I'm positive that she trusted Jordan completely to keep her safe!

Grandma really was an amazing woman and I learned many things from her, some of which I'm going to share with you all. Grandma was the most honest person I know, sometimes brutally, and I could always count on her to tell me if my outfit looked bad. But she taught me how to take criticism and keep my head up and she was always the first one to praise me on things I did well. She was also very encouraging to me and at the age of 14 when I graduated elementary school she gave me a beautiful card. Inside she had written the numbers 1, 2 and 3 and the first one she wrote in with Graduation 1997. Without even saying anything to me she conveyed that she darn well expected me to graduate not only from high school but also from some form of post secondary. I fulfilled my grandmother's expectations and after my high school and university graduations I brought the card back to her and got her to fill the years in. This card is something that I will keep for my whole life as it has always been and will continue to be a reminder that my Grandma believes in me and that I am capable of meeting her expectations.

Living with Grandma had some wonderful perks and some unfortunate moments. One awesome thing was that when something exciting in my life happened I not only had parents and a brother to tell but I also got to tell Grandma. It was always exciting to tell her my stories and she genuinely seemed to enjoy them, no matter how many times I repeated myself. One of the less exciting parts of living with Grandma was that we were straight across the hall from each other. This meant that on numerous occasions when a young person such as myself would be sleeping in on a weekend or holiday I would be woken up to her radio blasting out with

"THIS IS CBC RADIO NEWS, IT'S 10 O'CLOCK"! Try as I might it's simply impossible to sleep after that. And if I thought waking up like that was startling, I'll never forget (and I never repeated) the time I trudged down the hall to ask her to turn her radio down. Well Grandma had gone into her closet and when she came out and I was standing there it scared her so much she jumped and screamed and I had to

apologize for the whole day for spooking her. Thinking back on those many loud mornings I've pondered that she did that purposely because she didn't think I should be sleeping the day away or maybe because she was jealous that I could sleep so much. But now I realize it may actually have been a clever plot that my parents were behind because they knew that I would never sass at my Grandma for waking me up the same way I would to them. Well played Mom and Dale, kudos to you both! Like I said before Grandma lived with us for around 16 years and some were at the house on Tower, most on Hickory and some up in Washago. I have tonnes of memories of great times with Grandma; from helping her put in her earrings, to the care package she sent with me out West so I'd travel safe, to the strange noises that constantly came from upstairs which always turned out just to be Grandma rearranging furniture...again!

On behalf of her entire family I say to Grandma MIZPAH. The saying which was carved in Grandma and Grandpa's wedding rings and means; "May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another".

I now say goodbye to you Grandma; I hope that you have found Grandpa in the clouds and that you may rest peacefully knowing you are loved by many.

...by Kristen Andrews

