



Margaret Elaine McRory

October 15, 1940 - June 1, 2022

Elaine McRory, environmentalist, philanthropist, artist, athlete, educator, business owner, and loving mother and matriarch of her family passed away peacefully in her home following a long battle with ovarian cancer.

The daughter of Dick and Dolly Harmer, Elaine grew up literally all over the world as she and her mother moved often to remain close to her father during his career as a Naval Officer. Throughout her life Elaine was passionate about the outdoors, in particular fishing and skiing.

At 50 Elaine ran the Seattle half-marathon, placing first in her age division. For her 50th wedding anniversary, she and Mike visited the Canadian Arctic, 500 miles south of the north pole. Arctic adventure also included a two-week trip paddling the Noatak River in the Gates of the Arctic National Refuge. Her love of outdoor adventure meant many salmon fishing trips, hiking, kayaking, and camping. She loved kayaking trips along the B.C. coast from the outside of Vancouver Island to northern B.C. Being outdoors also included countless hours in her garden creating habitat for creatures large and small and an amazing esthetic experience for everyone to enjoy.

Elaine is known to many people in the Pacific Northwest and beyond for her decades-long commit to salmon recovery in the Whatcom County. Together with husband Mike McRory, she was instrumental in setting up the Nooksack

Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) and building that organization to what it has become today. Understanding the importance of education in salmon recovery she created the beginning of NSEA's education program, which began on Whatcom Creek working with middle school students. She has won numerous awards for her environmental work. In addition to her environmental interests, for years Elaine served on the board of the Bellingham Festival of Music, donated generously to Planned Parenthood, and was a member of the League of Women Voters.

Elaine was a teacher. She taught middle and high school art and English when she was in her twenties. She also taught briefly as a grade school teacher at Beach School on Lummi Island in the mid-seventies. She was loved for her patient and caring teaching style, always being sensitive to each child's unique way of learning. Her success was due to praising students for their talents and helping them overcome their challenges with a positive attitude. She was eternally optimistic. Her son Eric remembers her as a "life teacher." Repeated lessons included, "always treat others as you wish to be treated," and "try putting yourself in the other person's shoes." Elaine had a lot to share as a teacher.

From girlhood Elaine loved horses and as a young woman she bred and raised Arabians on her farm on Lummi Island. Upon selling her farm, she moved with her family to Bellingham and pursued graduate work in art at Western Washington University. After graduation, she became fascinated with applying the principles of origami to curved surfaces. This led her to set up a manufacturing company called Creations by Elaine. Elaine was proud that her hand-scored and decorated Christmas ornaments were sold in gift shops in every state of the U.S. and that her business created jobs for a number of people in the Bellingham community.

In addition to the art she created for her business, Elaine, the granddaughter

of Washington artist Tomas C. Harmer, created a substantial collection of oil paintings, pastels, and water color art work, much of which she generously shared with her family and close friends, especially at the many Christmas gatherings at her home in Bellingham.

Elaine is survived by her loving husband, Mike McRory, her son Eric McRory and daughter-in-law Erin Simpson, sister Corliss Harmer, brother Tom Harmer, nieces Kristy, Julie, and Michelle Harmer, nephew Bret Johnson, and brother-in-law Ed McRory. She also leaves many extended family and friends who loved her dearly. When asked how she would like to be remembered in her obituary, she said, "Please tell my family and friends how much I love and appreciate them. They mean the world to me. I am grateful to have had such awesome people in my life."

A date for Elaine's memorial service hasn't yet been chosen, but the family will let everyone know via Elaine's CaringBridge blog – Elaine | CaringBridge (www.CaringBridge.org/visit/ElaineMcRory). They would appreciate your kind words of remembrance on the Tributes page of Elaine's CaringBridge blog, and in lieu of flowers, donations to the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (n-sea.org) in Bellingham Washington.

A Celebration of Elaine's Life will be held on Sunday, June 26 at the Nooksack Salmon Association, 3057 E. Bakerview Rd, Bellingham WA 98226. Guest arriving at 1:00pm, service to begin at 2:00pm. ADA only parking on campus. There will be a shuttle to NSEA from a nearby parking lot.

Tribute Wall

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“ Steve and I send our sympathies to Mike, Eric and Erin on Elaine’s passing. We have known Elaine for many years and in many contexts — NSEA, boating, art , Planned Parenthood, and as a delightful, stimulating friend. Her talents and accomplishments were many, but perhaps the most notable was her desire to improve our community and our planet. From helping to launch NSEA (salmon preservation) to clearing blackberry bushes to establish Marine Heritage park, or to donating a painting to support the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, she enthusiastically acted to make things better. Much love to Mike and family,
Lynne Masland and Steve Mayo

Lynne Masland - June 08, 2022 at 12:00 AM