



Mavis Elizabeth Kerr

January 29, 1948 - July 23, 2024

KERR, Mavis Elizabeth, 76, of Wilmot Township. Our lives end in the middle of our story, and this was not the story she was writing. We are saddened by the untimely and unexpected conclusion of Mavis's story following a motor vehicle accident on Tuesday, July 23, 2024.

Born during a blizzard on January 29, 1948, in Chatham, Ontario, Mavis lived a life full of passion and vitality, with a love of friends, food, and knowledge.

Mavis, a farm girl at heart, spent her formative years on her family farm in Dresden, nurturing a deep curiosity about her world. An active member of 4-H, she went on to pursue studies in a wide variety of subjects. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Western University in 1968 and earned her medical degree from McMaster University in 1981. Her career spanned various fields, reflecting her broad interests and talents. She was a passionate science educator and entertainer at the Ontario Science Centre, which led her to roles on CBC TV, sharing her scientific knowledge on *Alphabet Soup*, *What on Earth*, and *Tomorrow Now*. Mavis was an engaging presenter. She also worked as a teacher, physician, canoe trip leader, resident naturalist, and, most recently, as a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist. Her diverse interests and contributions to science, education, and social activism are a testament to her inspiring and multifaceted life.

In addition to her love of science, Mavis was also a patron of the arts, frequently attending institutions like the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), and the Stratford Festival. A social butterfly, she was deeply involved in several communities, particularly with the Grand River Unitarian Congregation. She was an intersectional feminist and social activist, fervently advocating for the environment, human rights, and the right to die with dignity.

Art and science – particularly botany and zoology – factored deeply into her days, making Mavis known to many for her incredible gardens and love of birds. Ever the educator, she shared her plant and bird knowledge freely and enthusiastically. Her war on Garlic Mustard will live on. Her next chapter was to extend that war on the invasive Phragmites.

Mavis was predeceased by her parents, Alma Pearl Kerr (née McGregor) and George Grant Kerr, sister Carol Hudgins (Bob), and former partner John McRuer. She is survived by her partner Larry Kryski; siblings Tom Kerr (Sharon) and chosen sister Renée Gorrell; her children Geordie McRuer (Rahel Nega) and Ian McRuer (Nicole Kuyten); stepchildren Anne McRuer, Sandy McRuer, Gillian Woodrooffe, Kyla Kryski (Steve Herzog), and James Kryski; grandchildren Amelie McRuer, Ronin Nega, Hailey and Aurora Herzog; and special to Mavis Ava and Arlo Martin, as well as countless friends, extended family members, sisterhoods, and communities who cherished her vibrant spirit. She delighted in them all.

Mavis, affectionately known as "The Mave," was "a rad lady who did cool things," leaving a lasting impression on everyone she met. Her legacy of love, activism, and curiosity will continue to inspire all who knew her.

Cremation will take place. Friends are invited to visit with the family at the FUTHER-FRANKLIN FUNERAL HOME, 1172 Henry Street, Wellesley on

Tuesday, July 30 from 2-4 & 7-9 p.m. A memorial service will be held at Grand River Unitarian Congregation, 299 Sydney Street S., Kitchener on Friday, August 2, 2024, at 11 a.m. Reverend Jessica Rodela officiating.

If desired, donations in Mavis's memory may be made to Dying with Dignity, Avon Trail, or Nature Conservancy Canada would be appreciated.

www.futher-franklinfuneralhome.com

You may follow these links to donate online. You may also use debit or credit to donate at the funeral home.

Dying with Dignity: www.dyingwithdignity.ca/donate/

Avon Trail: www.avontrail.ca/

Nature Conservancy of Canada: www.natureconservancy.ca/en/

Cemetery Details

Parkview Crematorium

Waterloo, ON (CA)

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 30. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Futher-Franklin Funeral Home
1172 Henry Street
Wellesley, ON N0B 2T0 (CA)

Visitation

JUL 30. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Futher-Franklin Funeral Home
1172 Henry Street
Wellesley, ON N0B 2T0 (CA)

Celebration of Life

AUG 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

Grand River Unitarian Congregation
299 Sydney Street S.,
Kitchener, ON (CA)

Reverend Jessica Rodela officiating

Tribute Wall

CF

“ <https://waterloorecord.pressreader.com/article/281685440188200>

Christopher Franklin - August 27, 2024 at 06:04 PM

KE

“ Like many others posting here, I have known Mavis since I was 13, back at Lambton Kent DHS. Her mother Alma was my 4-H Homemaking Club leader and hosted many square dances in their large kitchen for the 4-H girls and boys she would recruit -- she thought us shy country girls needed to learn how to socialize.

Mavis and I rediscovered each other about 20 years ago when she was leading a bus tour to an Amish farm, as part of the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival. We'd meet each other, and her partner Larry, at the AB&C most years, but it wasn't until last year that we had a really great catch-up and talk.

Mavis wanted to buy a copy of my book, "This Land: the story of two hundred acres in Chatham-Kent" for her brother Tom's birthday. My husband Phil and I delivered the book to Mavis and Larry's place.

We had a great cup of perfectly timed tea (the 4-H training really stuck with Mavis), learned about Larry's enthusiasm for small scale nuclear reactors, saw and learned about Mavis's wonderful plants, etc. etc. What a wonderful visit that was!

Phil and I were fortunate to be able to attend Mavis's very moving memorial service at Grand River Unitarian Congregation. So many moving tributes.

I feel so lucky to have known her.

Kae Elgie - August 20, 2024 at 10:14 AM

BD

“ Mavis was my therapist throughout the majority of my time in high school. She was supportive and caring. She was an excellent sounding board and I wish I had stayed in touch more after she retired. I would've loved to have shared with her discoveries about myself that I think we both would've found explained so much of my difficulties during my teen years. The Mave always had something thought provoking to say and I've kept many of the notes she wrote me over the years. I'll miss her dearly and will always remember her for her smile and her laugh.

Beck Dix - August 07, 2024 at 11:26 PM

PW

“ There are so many great things to write about Mavis. Some examples that exemplify her great character and interests are: During a time when Mavis and Larry visited us in Winnipeg, Mavis, Larry and I (Pete) visited the Oak Hammock Marsh, a wildlife management area 21 miles north of Winnipeg. As soon as we gained entry to the marsh trails, Mavis took off like a rocket ahead of us displaying her great energy and deep interest in nature.

When we visited Larry and Mavis, in Wellesley, Mavis was out in the early morning tending to her massive and beautiful flower garden. It was wonderful to engage her in diverse fields of discussion at which she always displayed great knowledge.

Recently, during a discussion with Mavis about her enjoyment of a yoga session she just had, I quizzed her about the benefits of yoga. She obliged with a succinct explanation and without a request she sent me an e-mail 15 minutes later providing contact information of a yoga lesson provider in Winnipeg.

It was a great honor to know you, Mavis. Rest in peace.
Love Pete & Myiah Wagner

Pete & Myiah Wagner - August 05, 2024 at 11:01 AM

JS

“ I have fond memories of Mavis from our days at Lambton Kent District High School. Even though she was my first girl friend (during grade 13), we were always in a friendly competition to get the highest marks in the class; she always won and we knew then that she was going on to great success and special things. Like some others who have commented, I too spent many happy hours in that wonderful big farm kitchen. And Mavis' mom, Alma, played a big role in my other fellow students' lives as well. She organized trips to the Stratford festival, introducing me to Shakespeare in a way that simply reading the plays in class could not achieve. I continued to go to Stratford every year until I left Ontario for the NWT in 1984. So Mavis came by her intelligence and broad range of interests from a pair of great parents. I'm glad to see she had such a rich and varied life. She will be missed by many who benefited from her beautiful personality and extensive knowledge. I extend my sincere condolences to her family and friends.

Jim Sutton

Jim Sutton - August 02, 2024 at 11:13 AM

PP

“ To Larry and the family/friend circle, kindest condolences for your sudden and great loss. I was a year behind Mavis in high school and admired her from the moment we met. She was an inspiration to all. So bright, kind and cheerfully her own person! And great fashion sense! Mavis had it going on all of her life! I read the tribute with a tear and a smile. Thank you for that. She inspires me still. Mavis is a great loss to you and the whole world. I am so very sorry.

Patricia Patterson - August 02, 2024 at 08:49 AM

CD

“ Although we were first cousins I have not seen Mavis in a very long time. My husband Dale and I are so,so sorry to hear of her tragic death. What I remember most of Mavis was her ability to make you feel warm and special whenever you met her. Her smile would light up a room. Our maternal grandparents were also naturalists, back when no one called people naturalists. This has been passed down to many people in our family including Mavis. We will not be able to attend Mavis' funeral but send our sincere sympathy to all of her family. Colleen and Dale Dean.

Colleen Dean - August 01, 2024 at 08:57 PM

“ I deeply mourn the untimely passing of Mavis Kerr. Among her many talents, Mavis was a remarkable naturalist, who “walked the talk” - a visit to her home farm in Wellesley serves as vivid testimonial.

Mavis served as the Naturalist in residence at her church camp, Unicamp of Ontario, a setting she had known for many decades. Last summer, I was on several walks and hikes with Mavis. With regularity she demonstrated her deep awareness of the flora and fauna, and the splendour of Unicamp’s natural habitat. Most noteworthy was the thoughtful observation and deep appreciation of the many ways the natural habitat has evolved over the decades, that Mavis expressed to the staff, volunteers and Unicampers who accompanied her on these hikes and walks. This was very helpful and in some instances transformative commentary, particularly in instances where we had some uncertainty about the camp’s management of parts of the natural habitat.

I have a delightful short story I’d like to share. I accompanied Mavis and a youthful volunteer to a location on Unicamp’s portion of the Bruce trail to eliminate an invasive species, that Mavis had observed on an earlier hike. Unlike Mavis and myself who experienced the hike as challenging, the volunteer mastered the hike with the agility of a mountain goat. Every 40 metres or so Mavis would bring the hike to a stop by alerting us to a plant alongside the trail. After two or three of these plant alert stops, I realized the stops served the dual purpose of being a rest stop. The information shared was consistently so very meaningful, the volunteer never realized the dual purpose served by the regularity of the stops. Mavis you put a smile on my face that day and many other days. You have often warmed my heart and soul and I will deeply miss your friendship.

Dianne and I loved you very much. It has been a blessing to have you as a friend.

Ed Bennett - August 01, 2024 at 02:14 PM

DC

“ I have very fond memories of Mavis as we were fellow students at Lambton Kent District HS after I moved to Dresden in 1962. Went to many parties at her home on the farm and greatly enjoyed the uniqueness and brilliance of the entire Kerr family. Her mother taught home economics at the high school and her father was a well known farmer. Like father like daughter for on one cold winter night after a party and in possession of a freshly minted drivers license, I managed to land the family car in the ditch shortly after leaving the party. Her father came to pull us out with his trusty IHC super M tractor and instead of chewing us out for getting him out of bed at 2am, he gave us all an astronomy lesson. That small example pretty much summarizes the joy that they brought to everyone through their curiosity and love of sharing.
Dug and Lynn Campbell

Dug Campbell - August 01, 2024 at 01:26 PM

JB

“ Mavis will be very missed in the Unicamp community, as I'm sure she will be in all the other communities she blessed with her presence. I'm so glad I got to know Mavis in the last couple years, but of course wish I could have gotten to know her even more.

Unicamp mourns her loss and sends lots of love to her family.

My thoughts and love are with everyone who knew and loved her.

Joanna

Joanna Barrington - July 30, 2024 at 11:41 PM

KS

“ Kate S. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.

Kate S. - July 30, 2024 at 02:28 PM

YH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Y Houle - July 30, 2024 at 08:43 AM

AM

“ Ali Vahit Esensoy and Aadil Mangalji purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.



Ali Vahit Esensoy and Aadil Mangalji - July 29, 2024 at 06:58 PM

AM

“ Ali Vahit Esensoy and Aadil Mangalji planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.

Ali Vahit Esensoy and Aadil Mangalji - July 29, 2024 at 06:58 PM

SK

“ Thinking of all of you and wishing you peace.
Sincerely. Sherry and Doug Kerr 🥹

Sherry Kerr - July 29, 2024 at 04:24 PM

TF

“ The Laursen Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.



The Laursen Family - July 29, 2024 at 02:33 PM

TF

“ The Laursen Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.

The Laursen Family - July 29, 2024 at 02:33 PM

JE

“ I'm an old friend of Ian's, Mavis' younger son. Mavis rented me my first apartment in her basement when I left home at 17, in that time she took time to listen and talk with me about all of my quirky interests and big feelings, she also kinda just supported and loved our whole friend group, teaching us about plants and gardening and setting an example of how to be an open minded curious and loving learner.

We had just run into each other a few months ago and I excitedly told her I was on the verge of becoming a family therapist after years of farming and I was excited to reach out and reconnect while I practiced.

Once about 8 years ago she found my childhood diary that I must have left in the apartment 10 years previously, she mailed it to me with a cheeky note that she and a friend had to have a glass of wine and review the diary before sending it back! With anyone else I would have felt exposed but her loving acceptance and humour was evident in all of our sparse interactions.

Im so grateful for her generosity of time and space when I was getting my footing as a fresh (and messy) young "adult". Thank you Mavis, you were one very special and vibrant person. Sending so much love to the whole family, Im so sorry for this loss. <3

Jenni Evans - July 29, 2024 at 01:15 PM

JC

“ I am so sorry to hear this news. I knew Mavis through Unicamp and adored her. What a remarkable life she lived.

Janet Childerhose - July 28, 2024 at 06:04 PM

AK

“ Annalee kerr purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.



Annalee kerr - July 28, 2024 at 01:03 PM

AK

“ Annalee kerr planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.

Annalee kerr - July 28, 2024 at 01:03 PM

RS

“ Mavis was a medical school classmate of mine in the late 70’s, during which time we shared many laughs, played (and performed) music together, and encouraged each other through the challenges of medical training. I remember her intellectual and emotional honesty, her big smile and the mischievous twinkle in her eye.

During our first year in med school, a patient arrived very ill in the E.R. after picking and consuming wild mushrooms. The family brought in some of the mushrooms but the E.R. staff were stymied as to how to identify them. Mavis was not there but a classmate who was present remembered Mavis’s natural world skill set and managed (in that pre-internet, pre-cellphone era) to summon her; Mavis arrived in the E.R. to provide the needed expertise and save the day! She may as well have been wearing a Superman cape!! As these tributes show, Mavis continued to wear various “capoes” on her journey through life, bringing comfort, joy, wisdom and laughter to so many along her path.

My condolences to all whose lives she blessed and especially to her immediate family.

Rod Syme, Ottawa (retired surgeon)

Roderick Syme - July 28, 2024 at 08:21 AM

NI

Mavis told The mushroom story many times in the time I knew her. <3

Nici - July 28, 2024 at 02:33 PM

GG

Our hearts go out to you Larry; and your family on the loss of your loved one. We are so blessed to have known Mavis. She has left us too soon and will be missed but never forgotten. Ada & George Greer

GEORGE GREER - July 30, 2024 at 01:15 PM

JJ

“ Julie J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.

Julie J. - July 28, 2024 at 06:35 AM

MC

“ I'm so saddened by this sudden loss. I recently had the pleasure of attending Mavis' poetry event and touring her spectacular perennial garden. Her zest for life was truly inspiring. Her presence and contributions to many causes will be missed.

Michele Cadotte - July 27, 2024 at 08:02 PM

LH

“ I will be forever grateful to have had the privilege to know Mavis. She was the first counsellor with whom I had ever dared to share my soul . I went to her after my son died and my husband was diagnosed with MS. She was just the best of listeners. We connected. Even though it was many years ago, she had an enormous impact on my life....one of the best on this planet, for sure.!

Linda Huber - July 27, 2024 at 06:34 PM

BJ

“ Enjoyed our years together at Lambton Kent High School 1960 to 1965. Glad we had a visit with Larry and you in July at Frank and Brenda's place.



Barbara (Suitor) Jaruga - July 27, 2024 at 11:39 AM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.*



July 27, 2024 at 07:02 AM



“ *Love, Billy & Angela Kerr planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr.*

Love, Billy & Angela Kerr - July 27, 2024 at 07:02 AM



“ *I thoroughly enjoyed waiting on Mavis after her dental appointments...she was so bright, vital, engaged...always with a story about what she was doing next. Mavis was definitely a high point in my day. I am so sorry for you, Larry and family, for the shock of it all and this tremendous loss. You are all in my thoughts.*

Arden Linton - July 26, 2024 at 09:51 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Mavis and mothing*



Alan Macnaughton - July 26, 2024 at 08:44 PM

AM

“ 1 file added to the album *Mavis and mothing*



Alan Macnaughton - July 26, 2024 at 08:41 PM

AM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Alan Macnaughton - July 26, 2024 at 08:35 PM

HK

“ *Heather Knickle lit a candle in memory of Mavis Kerr*



Heather Knickle - July 26, 2024 at 07:40 PM

 Jon Parrott

“ *Mavis was such a wonderful person, and I have many fond memories of her kindness and warmth. Please know that my thoughts are with you and your family during this incredibly difficult time.*

Jon P

Jon Parrott - July 26, 2024 at 06:46 PM

KS

“ My deepest condolences to Larry and all who knew Mavis. My favourite memory of Mavis is the Yoga/Birthday Party we had at my Yoga Studio for Mavis and about a dozen friends. It was fabulous, and so was Mavis. ~Kate

Kate Stevely - July 26, 2024 at 04:03 PM

HK

“ To Larry, Geordie, Ian and families, We were so shocked and saddened to hear of Mavis's untimely passing this week. I always remember her gentle and fun-loving spirit and how happy she was to be a grandma! I will never forget the day I ran into her at Mimi's and she whipped out a very large book of photos of the grandkids to show me !! A lovely person who gave a lot to life, she will be very missed. Heather Knickle & Don Bowman

Heather Knickle - July 26, 2024 at 02:22 PM

WR

“ Our hearts go to the family, and not just the family but our entire community because Mavis left an impact. She impacted people in very many different ways. When we moved to Lisbon Rd. 11 years ago, Mavis and Larry arrived with home made muffins. She was the “scarecrow” lady that started our fair on the annual scarecrow competition. The first year Mavis went door-to-door to businesses, created scarecrow hoods to hand out to kids at Art ‘Round the Park to put faces draw faces. We had such fun. That year we had 49 registered scarecrows to decorate our countryside. Enough of that - Mavis did much more important work above and beyond our community as well. Mavis, you will indeed be missed. Your work was not yet complete and you will leave a void.

Wendy & Bruce Richardson - July 26, 2024 at 01:58 PM

RG

“ Dear Larry, Geordie, Ian and family,
My sincere condolences to you all. I was devastated and in disbelief to hear the tragic news! I started cutting Mavis's hair about 20 years ago and we soon became instant friends. I always enjoyed and looked forward to her appointments, as we always had such great chats and laughs over the years. It was always like catching up with a special friend. Mavis loved life, and she was one of the most sincere, smart, kindest, caring, helpful and most positive individual I have ever know. I will truly miss her and our monthly visits!

Sending love and hugs to you all!

Rosie

Rose Givlin - July 26, 2024 at 01:36 PM

LT

“ My sincere sympathies to all of Mavis family. I went to Esterville public school with Mavis and have many fond memories of our time together back then. She will be missed.

Linda Hughson — Trudgen - July 26, 2024 at 01:27 PM



“ Chris Franklin lit a candle in memory of Mavis Elizabeth Kerr



Chris Franklin - July 26, 2024 at 01:00 PM

NM

Mavis was my Unicamp Adventure Friend. ... We laughed together at the predicaments we got into...and I was so looking forward to sharing my August with her again.. Learning from her vast nature knowledge and thoroughly enjoying her engaging company and warm, giving personality. I will very much miss her.

Norah Menzies

Norah Menzies - July 27, 2024 at 01:23 AM

PP

To Mavis' family and friends, I am so sorry for your loss.

I knew Mavis in medical school when six of us formed a women's support group, a safe space to obtain guidance and solace. In a place with many bright stars, Mavis stood out. She embodied the term, effervescent. Sparkly and optimistic and also grounded in her approach to her career and to living her values. A solid, authentic person who knew how to have fun.

I am grateful to have known her.

*Pauline Pariser,
Toronto*

Paulline Pariser - July 28, 2024 at 04:47 PM

LV

Recently renewed a friendship with Mavis while the two of us were supporting another high school friend, Denise McKay from Dresden. Three way chats were full of old high school memories. Pictures soon followed of friends in common and 4H memorabilia. She glowingly reported on time spent with her grand children. Even as a teenager Mavis was full of knowledge and creativity which she readily shared. So sorry for your loss.

Linda (Sharpe) Vince

Linda Vince - July 29, 2024 at 12:01 PM

AR

*My thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time of sorrow.
RiP*

Sincerely,

Angela Rawlings

Angela Rawlings - July 29, 2024 at 11:27 PM

LE

*To Larry, Geordie and Ian and families
We wish you and your family peace and comfort as you grieve the loss
of your mother and partner. Ken and Laurie Erb*

laurie erb - July 31, 2024 at 11:08 AM

SM

*what a shock! Although we rarely saw each other, Mavis was like a
second mother to me. She was always welcoming, wanting to know all
about my exploits on Vancouver Island. In many ways she was the
glue that kept our family together. We will miss her.*

Sandy McRuer - July 31, 2024 at 04:31 PM