

## Darlyene Harrington



**1952-2010**

Sometime in mid 1970's, five women came together by chance and circumstance: Bernadette Rowe, Marlene King-MacKinnon, Collette Vessey, Cheryl Stead and Heather Stead. In 1978 Heather introduced her summer-work friend, Darlyene Harrington, and in a short period of time we became the "Group of Six". A strong bond was formed by common interests and a friendship that saw us laugh and cry together ever since - almost 40 years.

Jean Darlyene, or Darlyene Jean as we always called her, was born on June 20, 1952 to her parents Gladys and Leighton Harrington. She was the third child in the family, having an older brother Wayne and sister Joyce, and a younger sister Shawna. She went to Spring Valley school, graduated from Kensington High and then pursued her Bachelor of Education degree at Acadia University, from where she graduated in 1974. She spent her teaching career at Charlottetown Rural High School and retired from there in 2007. Dar loved teaching, truly enjoyed her students, and was dedicated to her profession. Years later former students would tell her she was their favorite teacher.

Dar loved music, particularly country which she liked to call "country rock". She never missed the Cavendish Beach Music Festival. She attended so many concerts, both on-Island and off. She was a theatre buff: confederation Centre, MacKenzie Theatre, The Guild, Watermark, Harbourfront, Victoria Playhouse, Georgetown - she never missed a show. She took in more than one Broadway production too. She was an easy critic.....rarely finding fault in any show!! She loved all types of entertainment, going out to dinner, to the movies, the beach, reading. She was seldom idle and organized our group into many events and activities over the years.

When Darlyene retired at the age of 55, she became active in a variety of interests. She went to seniors' college and Curves. And even before retirement she played golf; she both downhill and cross country skied. We all know though that Dar pursued these activities mostly for the social component. Nine holes of golf was a round and two ski runs in the morning and one in the afternoon was a day on

the slopes. While it didn't qualify her for athleticism it sure made for a good time. Most of all she travelled. Where has she not been?

Darlyene loved her family; she loved her friends and most of all she loved her dogs. Goomer, Molly and Scooter, her canine companions over the years, were all so special to her. Now perhaps some of us might think that Scooter could have been a better behaved dog but he really kept Dar going on some of the darker days. When she was feeling all the worst effects of chemotherapy, Scooter would lie beside her in bed for hours.

Dar was loyal to her friends and didn't suffer fools. She had family friends, travel friends, golf friends, dinner friends, theatre friends, movie friends, teacher friends and us, the G-6. She was forgiving of her friends, always seeing the positive; she didn't "sweat the small stuff". She was thoughtful and caring and made each of us feel special.

Darlyene had disappointments in her life but she didn't let them define her. When life "handed her lemons, she made lemonade" and occasionally added a shot of gin to it! More than once she picked up the pieces and moved on. Dar was rarely out of sorts. She might tell you something made her angry but never showed the anger; however, when she used her "teacher voice" we sat up and took notice!

But the blonde, good-time girl we pay tribute to taught us a lesson in courage when she was diagnosed with cancer in the summer of 2010. We marveled at the dignity, determination and pure grit with which she faced her ordeal. And an ordeal it was. But ever the optimist, Dar bore the misery and looked forward to being well again. To celebrate the end of chemotherapy four of us took a girlfriends' trip to New York City. How is that for spunk? At the end of nine months of chemo she was back in full travel mode. That really was a celebration!

Thoughtful, optimistic, determined, courageous, loyal, sense of humor, these are all traits we associate with Darlyene. She even saw humor when the joke was on her.

Dar loved gardening and nature and we all jumped at the opportunity to plant a tree in tribute to her. The Red Oak Heather chose fits Dar perfectly - unique, strong and resilient.

To each of us Darlyene was special, a woman of strength and character, who loved a good time, made the most of it and gave to each of us so much in so many different ways. We miss her every day.