



## Winnifred Pearl (Durdle) Ball

March 15, 1936 - March 5, 2021

After a long illness, Winnifred Pearl (Durdle) Ball, known as “Winnie,” died on March 5, 2021 at her home in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, with her family nearby. Winnie was born March 15, 1936 in New Waterford, Nova Scotia, Canada to George Arthur Durdle and Melina Beatrice (Thorne) Durdle. Her paternal grandparents were William Durdle and Charlotte “Emily” (Mansfield) Durdle of New Melbourne, Newfoundland. Her maternal grandparents were William Thorne and Mary Ann (Austin) Thorne of Brownsdale, Newfoundland. The 11th of 12 children (including a stillborn son) born to George and Melina, Winnie grew up in a large family with 7 brothers and 3 sisters in the heyday of Cape Breton coal mining. She was fiercely proud of her family members, heritage, and Cape Breton upbringing. She often said you could take the girl out of Cape Breton but not the Cape Breton out of the girl. She proudly displayed a miner’s lamp in her home and showed it to anyone who came by for a visit. After Winnie married and moved to the USA, she still returned to Cape Breton every year until she was no longer able to travel. She made sure that her two children appreciated and understood their Cape Breton roots.

After graduating from high school, Winnie moved to Halifax for a year and worked for Sears in the refunds department. Little did she know at the time that a slip on an icy sidewalk and resulting badly broken ankle would change the trajectory her life. Winnie moved back to New Waterford to recuperate and decided to become an elementary school teacher. She graduated from Nova Scotia Normal College and then taught school for 5 years, first in Scotchtown and then kindergarten in New Waterford. She left teaching to marry Thomas James Ball in Calvin United Church, New Waterford, in August 1961 and then move to his hometown, Chester, Connecticut, USA. Winnie and Tom lived in Chester, CT from 1961 until October 2004 when they moved to their daughter’s home in Alexandria, VA.

Winnie’s hobbies included baking, cooking, gardening, reading, knitting, and all sorts of arts and crafts. She loved children, especially the youngest ones, and was known to sing nursery rhymes and entertain them throughout the years wherever and whenever she saw them. Neighborhood children liked to visit because she always had homemade cookies.

Winnie was known as the ultimate hostess. She loved to plan, organize, and host parties ranging from backyard picnics and beach parties to large family reunions that were sometimes mistaken as the local community festival days. Winnie was an animal lover of all types and had a special lifelong connection with dogs in particular. She enjoyed all the wildlife that came through the backyard of her country home. Winnie loved her family and was always willing to try something new, especially if her children asked. She loved it when family and friends from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Ontario came to visit. Her favorite vacation place was Cape Breton.

Winnie is survived by: her loving husband, Thomas Ball (Alexandria, VA); daughter Karen A. Ball (Alexandria, VA); and son George E. Ball (Cape Breton). She is also survived by her sister-in-law Eileen (Gregor) Durdle of New Waterford. Additionally, Winnie is survived by many nieces and nephews and their partners: Dr. Brenda Mary Durdle (Jim MacDonald), William "Billy" Durdle (Donna), Joann Murray (Curtis), Linda Durdle, Norma Tower (Jim), Nancy O'Brien (Donald), Lynne Gillis (Duncan), Evelyn Nieforth (Donald), Joan Chafe (Dr. John), Donna Lee Coady, Alan Durdle (Cathy), Lorna Durdle Danchuk (Greg), Eva Doell (Brad), Rhona Reynen (Gordon), Heather Hello, and Hazel MacDonald. Winnie is also survived by longtime friends John and Kelly Magee of Chester, CT and their three children who in their childhood "adopted" Winnie as their grandmother: Cole, Grant, and Corinne Magee. It was a role she welcomed whole heartedly and cherished.

Winnie was predeceased by her parents and grandparents. She was predeceased by all her siblings and all but one of their spouses: Earl Robert "Diddy" Durdle (Josephine "Jo" Johnstone), William Chesley "Ches" or "Dit" Durdle (Effie MacKay), Florence Belle Pyke (John Pyke), Allister "Diddle" Durdle (Edith "Tootsie" Meyer), Norman George Durdle (Elfrieda Helena "Fiddy" Althoff), Edward Lawrence Durdle, Leonard Durdle (Gladys Murrant), Ruby Myrtle MacDonald (Roderick MacDonald), Ronald Bernard "Moe" Durdle (Brenda MacLeod), and Hazel Neville Durdle. In addition Winnie was predeceased by nephews Allister "Butch" Durdle, Jr., Edward Gregor Durdle, and George Archibald Durdle. Now that she has joined them, Winnie is probably busy organizing a reunion party for all the deceased family members she has missed so dearly.

The Jefferson Funeral Chapel in Alexandria, VA is handling final arrangements including cremation. Due to the pandemic, there are no calling hours. Private services will be held at the convenience of the family at a future date. Donations may be made online to the Animal Welfare League of Arlington VA at [www.awla.org/donate/donate-online/](http://www.awla.org/donate/donate-online/) in Winnie's memory.

# Comments

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“ When our family moved onto Winnie's street six years ago, we were thrilled to discover that our neighborhood came with the best adopted grandma we could imagine. Winnie and Karen were the first to greet us in our new home. Our kids instantly knew Winnie loved them and we will always treasure the memories of happy times with her, being spoiled with candy and playing with the fireplace in Karen's house, planting daffodil bulbs, and of course eating the many amazing holiday cookies. Although we only knew her at the end of her life it was so clear that she had lived an abundant life full of love for everyone she met. She had such a warm and welcoming heart and we feel privileged to have known her. I hope to live more like her example, and the example of Tom, Karen, and George in providing such devoted care to her in the last few years. Until we meet again, dear Winnie! - Sarah Blake and family: KC, Annie, Bradley, Chris, Penny, and Lucy

**Sarah Blake** - April 01 at 01:20 PM

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Dear Tom, Karen and George,

We are very sorry for all of you to have had to say goodbye to your dear wife and mother. Winnie was so blessed to have her husband and kids show her compassion in her journey through her life. She lovingly took care of all of you and you all returned this love to her and supported her when she was faced with illness. May God bless each of you.

My first memory of Winnie was soon after we moved onto Baker Road in Chester. She made a Jewish coffee cake and brought it next door to us. I was a little bit shy, but I appreciated that welcoming gesture. That summer my husband and I adopted a brown velvet Chesapeake puppy. I will say because of Murphy and my friendly husband John, Winnie would soon be a part of my daily life.

Each morning our dog would swoosh his tail on Winnie's back door and soon Winnie would appear with a dog bone and a gigantic Estée Lauder perfumed hug! Winnie would say he was her little pony. Even more irresistible to her was our kids! When the kids were born she just adored spending time with them. She loved the commotion and the energy that they produced. She made my children feel extra special, she had a way of making them feel wonderful and the cookies she baked them only enhanced her grandma charm!

Winnie was a gifted storyteller, she had an amazing recall and could almost make you feel you were with her walking through the rooms of her childhood home. What an amazing foundation her parents and siblings brought to her. She always spoke of her mother having had a very strong constitution. Winnie respected and loved her family so very much. She would describe her aunts home in such a way that you almost felt you could smell the bright red geraniums in her window boxes.

What I really loved was how she said my name. You could hear the affection in her voice. Having Winnie in my life made me feel so special and so fortunate. She was my extra mom, my kids extra grandmother. She was a one in a million.

I realize there are many who called her Aunt Winnie, the names of whom I remember Winnie speaking in that adoring way.

May each of you find comfort in the many smiles, laughs, and unmeasurable bits of wisdom she graciously gave you.

I remember Winnie teaching a 100 year old community member how to knit. This was such a beautiful thing to witness, her patience and spirit was a gift to all.

I can envision her now, it's a warm day, her sunny disposition, her famous stuffed shells, her red cedar picnic table, she's laughing, smiling and full of joy. Suddenly she says, " I'll be right back." She emerges from the house proudly carrying a homemade lemon meringue pie.

Her spirit and her generosity were legendary.

For now, until we meet again Winnie Ball, enjoy catching up with your many loved ones and thank you so very much for your unwavering friendship.

I love you!

Kelly



“ Tom, Karen & George,  
Please accept our sincerest condolences. Dear Winnie was go wonderful to our children and my wife Kelly. We live next for to to Tom & Winnie here in Chester,CT. We have so many fond memories of the years that we were blessed to share with her. I loved how she would sing whim she baked those award winning pies, loved her birds and surroundings. I cherish and still wear a beautiful Irish knit sweater she made for me and many of my family members.  
Winnie was always so welcoming in her home, she was so proud of her Canadian heritage, for years she begged us to visit them at the special place in Point Michaud. We finally made it one summer when our kids were quite young, once we finally made it we understood why she pushed Tom so hard to get his trailer packed and on the long journey to her special getaway. George we can understand why you love it up there.  
Karen you wrote a wonderful tribute to our dear Winnie. Tom here's a beer toast to you my friend (a St. Pauli)  
Winnie- Rest In Peace

John, Kelly, Cole, Grant, Corinne & our family dog Murphy

**John Magee** - March 09 at 06:41 AM

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“ I am sorry to hear of Winnies passing. I have many great childhood memories of Winnie and your family. Sending you all our love.  
Tammy Durdle-Malcolm

**Tammy Durdle-Malcolm** - March 08 at 07:06 PM

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“ Karen, I was so sorry to hear about your mom's passing. My thoughts are with your family. Take care.

**Laura Barnard** - March 08 at 06:00 PM

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“ Donald and I are sorry to hear of Winnies passing .we have wonderful memories of our visits to her home in Connecticut and of all the fun we had at the Point.She loved her family dearly ..hold on to your memories Donald and Nancy

**Nancy O'Brien** - March 08 at 04:51 PM

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“ All us Durdle cousins couldn't wait for Winnie and Tom to arrive at the Point so the partying would begin. We could could write books about those summers. Even when it was foggy and raining for weeks, it was always fun at the cabin on the hill. Before the sun was up the laundry was hanging on the line and the cookies were made. Winnie's energy level was exceptional. She could laugh almost as hardy as Nanny Durdle. Wish we could all be to get her to celebrate her life. No doubt a glass or two will be raised in her honour this summer. Thinking of you Tom, Karen and George.

**Donna Lee Coady** - March 08 at 04:42 PM

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“ So sad to hear of Winnie's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family.  
Duncan,Lynne and family

**Lynne Gillis** - March 08 at 04:32 PM

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“ Growing up across from my grandmother, I spent enormous amounts of time at her place. I loved Aunt Winnie. She was like another mother, as was her mother, to me. She is at peace. As Aunt Eileen has said of others “she got away”. Bless the family, Tom, Karen and George. It is hard without a mother, no matter your age. Take care of each other. Much love,  
Brenda

**brenda** - March 08 at 04:31 PM



“ Winnie was an incredible Aunt and Great Aunt. Even her youngest sister Hazel would have said she was the best! Always welcoming family with open arms at the Point Michaud white cottage on the hill. A still point in time for many Durdle families! Her generosity shined through as soon as the door opened with offers of cookies and sodas and an open ear to listen to all the children who were so fortunate to have her as their Aunt. Horse shoe tournaments highlighted the summer with potluck meals and pranks and evenings filled with stories upon stories. Summer card games at Winnies featuring groups of scat players, popcorn, drinks and smiles. Her warm, contagious laughter echoed softly through all those little ears who beckoned to be in her presence summer days and evenings. Always a listening ear; even when we were older with our own children the welcoming cottage on the hill with cookies and sodas and laughter stood still. One night at 1 am; worried about my own teen boys camping at the Point in a thunderstorm, I ran up the hill to Winnie for support and she opened her door and heart. Then travelling to Virginia to visit Winnie, Tom and Karen - containers piled with homemade cookies and incredible meals! Top of the line like Dad would always say about his beloved sister!!  
Dad would sneak up the hill in the early summer mornings to share coffee with Winnie in the cottage or at their hideout in the greenhouse - I'll never forget when I found them and how lovely it was to see them chatting heart to heart. Karen welcomes in Virginia and George's welcomes in Point Michaud always reminded me of their mother's warmth. It always felt like home and still does in large part due to Winnies Legacy. I loved her dearly; I will always miss her and think of her fondly while sharing story upon story about her with my loved ones at Point Michaud. My deepest sympathy to Karen and George for the loss of an incredible Mom - one who really did break the mold. Cherish your memories; all the good times and I know you will take her with you wherever you go or whomever you are with. Look after each other. Love, Rhona (Durdle) Reynen

**Rhona Reynen** - March 08 at 09:18 PM

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“ Point Michaud will never be the same without Winnie. Many of my best memories there include playing cards or scrabble and listening to Winnie's laugh. She was a kind and caring person who was known to sneak the odd cookie to dad on his early morning visits. They certainly shared a special brother- sister bond. We will miss but will never forget her.

Keeping you in our thoughts, Tom, Karen and George.

**Eva Doell** - March 08 at 04:23 PM



“ During my many summer visits to Len and Gladys's cabin at the Point, one of my favourite memories is having Winnie pop in with morning coffee in hand, to commiserate with Len. I loved her hearty laugh and the stories that she and Len would spin. I remember her amazing pies, the full clotheslines - every day and watching her play Canasta. She was a big part of the Point Michaud charm.

Thinking of you with warm thoughts Tom, Karen and George.

**Janice Murrant** - March 08 at 05:03 PM



“ Winnie certainly loved a story whether it was one she was spinning or one she was listening to. Like Nanny, she was often brought to tears with uncontrollable laughter. Her warmth, kindness and sense of humor are linked to my many happy memories of her. Karen, George and Tom - Greg and I extend our most sincere sympathy for your loss.

**Lorna Durdle** - March 08 at 05:42 PM



“ I met her late in the timeline. But she welcomed us CFAs with the generosity and warmth all the people above have mentioned. I had a long conversation with Danny Madden and he kept circling back to the fun and affection he remembered when Winnie and Tom arrived. I wish I had known her earlier--and I'm so lucky to have met her when I did.

**Del** - March 08 at 09:44 PM



“ My sincere condolences to George Karen and Tom on their loss. Winnie was one of a kind and had a way of making you feel like family from the moment you met her. My late husband Wayne said she felt like everybody's mom. We cherished the time we had with her and hope she can now rest in peace. Sending hugs to the family. Love Linda Landry

**Linda** - March 08 at 11:13 PM



“ Winnie was a kind and gentle soul who brought light and warmth into any room she entered. I have fond memories of her kindness to our boys and of her delicious pies, served in "slices" that were really 1/4 of a pie. Karen, George, and Tom: Sid, Daniel, Jonathan and I send you all a hug. We will all miss Winnie. <3

**Shari Schwartz** - March 17 at 12:03 PM