

Bowen's 'angel' leaves a legacy of caring for others

Ellen Dorman passed away peacefully on June 6, 2004 in Evergreen House, North Vancouver. Ellen will be remembered and missed by many on Bowen Island.

Ellen was born on March 27, 1910 in Vancouver to parents Francis Augustus and Florence Loretta (Barron) King. She married Percy Charles (Ped) Dorman in 1938. She used to laugh and say that she had come from barons and kings, and now she was a doorman. She was the third oldest of nine siblings. She had a happy childhood and went on to obtain her nursing qualifications in Vancouver in 1934. She practiced her nursing at Infants' Hospital on Haro Street for two years, before taking a position with Glen Hospital for Seniors until it closed down. She then nursed at the Kingsway Nursing Home in Burnaby for four years until it closed because the property was sold to become Metro-town Centre.

Ellen then bought her family home from her father and turned it into a 35-bed facility in Burnaby, known as McKay Private Nursing Home. On Bowen, her husband Ped had a full time business, so every weekend and holiday, Ellen would pack up her two children, Mary Ellen and Jim, to travel in one of the Sannie boats to Bowen, no matter what the weather, which proved to be an adventure on more than one occasion. In her early days there was no power, but they did have a generator. Ellen loved Bowen Island and was able to make it her permanent home in 1965 when she sold McKay nursing home.

Being a natural nurturer, throughout her life, Ellen's primary concern has been people, especially those in need, including animals. She became an integral part of the community. Being an unpaid, unofficial health nurse, she would help where ever

need. She thought nothing of climbing up and down embankments, going through dense bush and driving over logging roads to reach her patients. She did what ever was necessary to reach and treat her patients. Her driving tended to be fast and furious.

Ellen became known as the Angel of Bowen through her caring of the people and animals of Bowen, as well as her untiring service to the community. Ellen was the instigator and supporter for some of the buildings and services we have on Bowen today. She was a driving force behind the construction of St. Gerard's Church. She did many things for this cause; most remembered is the Strawberry Tea and bazaar which was held every August as a fundraising event. The Strawberry Tea tradition still continues as an annual event today.

She was also part of a group who worked together to have the Old General Store rebuilt and dedicated as a heritage building, a group who also worked to create and retain Crippen Park as park land. Ellen was involved in the building of the Legion and was a founding member of the Royal Canadian Legion Auxilliary. For this she received a lifetime membership and the Legion's highest merit badge.

Over the years Ellen received recognition from a number of organizations for her work and dedication to the community. Some of these included a beautiful handmade quilt, an original



presentations from other groups. In 1979, Ellen received the prestigious honour of being chosen Bowen Island's first Citizen of the Year. When asked if she would be in the parade, in typical Ellen fashion, she said thank you but she would not be able to as she had to cook chickens for the festival.

For 40 years Ellen was the Angel of Bowen, but she had to curtail her nursing adventures when she had two knee replacements done while in her 70s. When Ellen was 72, she joined the North Shore Nursing Homemakers, working in palliative care until she retired at the age of 81.

For her 90th birthday, Ellen and her daughter Mary Ellen went on a four-month trip, and her son Jim joined them for six weeks. They travelled by train and cruise ship to Greece, England, and eastern Canada, visiting with family and seeing the sights. She celebrated her birthday on a cruise ship in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Ellen thoroughly enjoyed it and took everything in her stride. Ellen passed away at

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