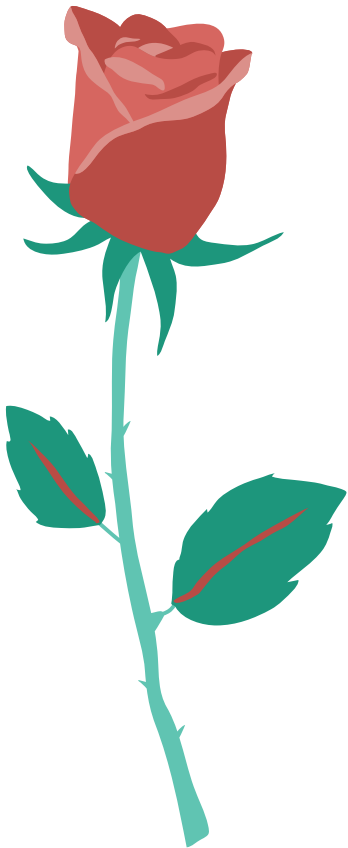


A Tribute to Ruth Mellor



On November 1, 2025, Ruth Mellor passed away. Ruth was our Club's past president, a friend, a mentor, a community leader and so much more. Ruth was a force to be reckoned with. Besides her involvement with CFUW, Ruth was a founding member of Kelowna and District Pro-Choice Society, Central Okanagan Community Gardens, and the Kelowna Film Society. For most of these groups she was the first chair, and remained involved until later this year.

Ruth and her husband Gary arrived in Kelowna in late 1971 for Gary's teaching job at Okanagan College. Stephanie Barnes met Ruth when Ruth, who had a Masters in Nutrition, visited the dietitians at Kelowna General Hospital. Stephanie could tell right away Ruth would enjoy CFUW and convinced her to join. Ruth joined our Kelowna CFUW in 1972. Stephanie was right! Ruth was an active and engaged member of our club ever since.

Over the years, Ruth became more involved in our club serving in many roles. Ruth was President three times, and in the past few years, she was a member of the Leadership Team. Ruth introduced and organized our sales of Femenino Coffee with proceeds going to Education Awards (she also encouraged several other BC clubs to do the same). She participated in many of our interest groups including the Walkers, Adopt a Road and the Out to Lunch Bunch to name a few. Ruth hosted the last three International Women's Day breakfasts in her home with recent immigrants as guest speakers.

Always interested in helping the less fortunate, Ruth formed our team, 'The Hot to Trots' to participate in the annual walks sponsored by the Coldest Night of the Year, a national group that raises money for organizations that provide services for the needy people in the community. Ruth also initiated having Club members volunteer at one of the Salvation Army's Christmas Kettles. This went on for a few years.

In the wider CFUW organization, Ruth was on the first Board of the BC Council and helped develop their constitution and bylaws. She served a term as President of this council which meant being a VP on the National CFUW Council. Later she was BC East Regional Director at least twice, and wrote a resolution for clotheslines. Additionally, she was part of the group that wrote a resolution on Youth Homelessness for National. Over the years she attended many National AGMs, and pretty much every BC Council AGM. In fact our club hosted, with Ruth's help, two BC Council AGMs, and the 1997 National AGM, chairing the committee with Marnie Sullivan.

Ruth received the Governor General Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. It was a well-deserved award. With her many valuable contributions to our Club and to our community, Ruth was truly a role model for many. She was also a very good friend who will be remembered and missed



A Tribute to Ruth Mellor in Photos



Ruth Marie Mellor (nee Werry) passed away on November 1, 2025 at the age of 79.

Born in Bowmanville, Ontario on September 4th, 1946, Ruth is survived by her husband Gary, her son Simon (wife Tanya) and granddaughters Sloane and Grier. Ruth's Daughter, Stephanie died tragically in 2001. Ruth has an older brother David (Marilyn) and is predeceased by a younger sister Margaret and a younger brother Peter.

Ruth grew up in small town Ontario. Ruth would often describe herself as "Extremely shy and quiet" and as having "Extremely red hair". A memory that was special to her was when her mother and her went to buy plants and the salesperson gave her free marigolds and told her – we redheads need to stick together. Ruth was an excellent student and in fact skipped a grade. Ruth spoke fondly of these days, but she and her siblings also had to navigate hard and sad moments as their parents, Winnifred and Kenneth, both passed before Ruth turned 20. Losing their parents early on created a special bond between Ruth and her siblings – something she treasures to this day.

Ruth attended Guelph University and completed a Bachelor's in Home Economics in 1968. While attending Guelph, Ruth met her husband Gary Mellor, and they were married in 1967. Ruth and Gary moved to Vancouver in 1969 where they both attended UBC. Ruth earned her Master's in Nutrition while Gary finished his PHD.

In December of 1971, Ruth and Gary moved to Kelowna which was to be their home from then on. Their daughter Stephanie was born in 1972 and their son Simon was born in 1974. Ruth had a number of jobs when the kids were younger – writing a regular article on Nutrition for the Daily Courier, teaching cooking courses for people with intellectual disabilities, shop smart nutrition tours at grocery stores, and several others. Later when Stephanie and Simon were older, she returned to work full-time as a Food Services supervisor at Kelowna General Hospital until her retirement in 2009.

Ruth was a loving and dedicated mother. She was deeply involved in all of her children's activities from school to sports to music. She worked tirelessly to provide opportunities, unwavering support and encouragement for Stephanie and Simon.

Ruth's dedication and commitment did not end with her family. She was the special type of person who saw things that needed to change or people that needed help, and actually did something about it.

Ruth was active in Kelowna from the moment she arrived. She was a founding member of the Pro-Choice Action Society. The creation of this group, resulted in phone call death threats, but that only served to strengthen her resolve. Ruth was an active and passionate member of the Pro-Choice community. Ruth was a member of the Canadian Federation of University Women from 1972 until her passing and served on its Provincial and National boards. Ruth was a founding member and longtime Chair of the Central Okanagan Community Gardens.

Ruth was the founding member and chair of the Kelowna Film Society. Ruth was also on the board for the Kelowna Women's Resource Centre for years.

It would be unlikely that the many friends and colleagues who worked alongside Ruth at these various charities and foundations would describe her as "Extremely shy and quiet." For her dedication to many different organizations and the impact that she had on her community, Ruth received the prestigious Governor General Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. Ruth also received several other honors including the Gert Beadle Award. In 2018, Ruth was selected to act as a delegate to a session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Beyond being a great wife, a great mom, and a tireless force in the community – Ruth was a really enjoyable and fun person. She loved to laugh and never more so than at her own jokes. Ruth was almost as colorful as the bright green and orange colors she loved to wear. Ruth was a voracious reader who must surely have borrowed more books from the Kelowna Library than any other person. Ruth was always doing something new - she played racquetball, she made jams (delicious) and chutneys (less so), she took French classes, she made earrings and the list goes on.

Ruth loved her friends, and she loved spending time with them. She always looked forward to weekly walks and regular coffees with her longtime friends here in Kelowna. Ruth made a point of seeing and staying connected to other longtime friends, going back to her days at Guelph.

Ruth and Gary were married for 58 years. They met as students, they moved out west together, they built a life, raised a family, and were enjoying their golden years together. After the kids moved away, Ruth and Gary travelled frequently. Over the last while they took cruises all over the world – including to Iceland, Alaska, Japan, Europe, Argentina, and Hawaii. They enjoyed attending the annual Roots and Blues festival in Salmon Arm. Ruth and Gary were also long-time morning swimmers at H2O. Gary counted his laps and Ruth counted the minutes until she could go in the hot tub. They loved each other very much.

It is with great sadness that we mark the end of Ruth's life. She was smart and funny, and we will miss her dearly. But we also want to take this time to acknowledge a life very well lived indeed.

In keeping with her wishes we would ask that in lieu of flowers any gifts or donations in Ruth's name be made to the Central Okanagan Community Gardens.

info@centralokanagancommunitygardens.com

A Celebration of Ruth's life will be held at a time and place to be determined.

Written by Simon Mellor