



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

#### *RCH ALUMNAE 2025 PRESIDENTS UPDATE*

*A*s many of you know, we were approached at the beginning of 2025 by the RCH Foundation to attend a meeting with members of the new RCH build committee, and RCH Foundation liaisons.

At that meeting we were told that the stained-glass window that we were working on for our Archive display could not go forward, as it was triggering to some of the Indigenous community. At that point we were also unsure of how our Archive display could or would move forward.

After sharing this message with our Alumnae members, the RCH Director (Sheila Finamore) received our heartfelt feedback and became aware of the situation. We were invited to another meeting which included the Director, Sheila Finamore and also members of the FHA Indigenous committee.

Long story short, FHA's intention was not to make

our past invisible, and they want to work with us on moving forward on a display of our Archives where we would feel our history was represented. This would not include the proposed stained-glass window.

The decision process is moving forward, slowly. Our last communication from Sheila Finamore indicated that Jan Ballard, the Art curator for the new RCH building, would review the items the Archive committee had shared with her. This would be shared with the Indigenous Committee, and then with the Alumnae.

We hope to devote a good part of our next regular meeting on October 2 to discussing our Archive display. This will include any updates we have and to seek feedback or new ideas from members.

*Thank you.*

*Eileen Brown, President, 78B*



*RCH Alumnae, AGM 2025*

## TREASURY REPORT RCH ALUMNAE AGM JUNE 4, 2025



When we last met for our General Meeting on March 12, 2025, our total assets were \$84,300.30.

In March our only expense was \$70.00 for the rental of St. Michaels for our meeting. We also saw \$598.36 deposited in Membership Dues.

We did not have any expenses in April, but another \$280.00 in Dues was deposited.

Finally, in May we put down a \$1000.00 deposit for the Christmas Luncheon at the Vancouver Golf Course. We also spent \$567.00 on the rental of the Scandinavian Centre for the AGM. In the credit column, \$600.00 in Membership Dues were deposited.

As of May 31, 2025, the RCH Alumnae has total assets of \$84,141.96.

*Submitted by Eva Aslin, Treasurer, 78B*

## ARCHIVE REPORT

- Archival items still at the Storage Facility in Coquitlam
  - For Jan from Ballard Fine Art
  - For Hospital display wall
  - Furniture that needs to be taken, there are names on some items
  - Personal items – Anne, and ?
- Items taken to Myrna's home
  - For the New Westminster Museum
  - For AGM or other meeting to be offered to alums or given to a thrift store or? Any ideas welcome.
  - A local antique store has shown some interest to use items for movie props.
- Museum update – Elaine has been talking to John at the New Westminster Museum and he has indicated that they are interested in looking at our archival items. They have said they are willing to come to Myrna's home to view them and will make an appointment with us. Elaine spoke with John on July 4 and he will be making arrangements with the archivist, Erin.

*Submitted by Myrna Bloch 70B  
and Elaine Olson 70B*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2025

Hello Fellow RCH Grads!  
If you are not already a paid Alumnae member, please consider joining us! No participation is required in Alumnae activities but the annual \$20 fee helps us keep the association running. The large sum of money in our account is considered charitable and has been designated to our Archival Legacy Display, creating a bursary in perpetuity at RNFBC and topping up the Gussie MacPhail Bursary through the RCH Foundation. Your membership dues help pay for venue rentals, AGM costs (food, flowers, 50-year pins), office supplies, the Newsletter and the Christmas Luncheon at the Vancouver Golf Club. We hope to keep the Alumnae active until the class of 78B celebrates their 50-year anniversary in 2028, longer if any of you want to stay on!

As of the end of June we currently have 182 paid members. Membership is down from last year's

total of 224. We now have a separate email for e-transfers; email your dues to treasurer, Eva Aslin at [rchalumnae.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:rchalumnae.treasurer@gmail.com). I've attached the directions for e-transfer to this email, please read! We still accept cheques via Canada Post. I've attached a membership form with my contact info. Don't hesitate to email me at [rchrnalumnae@gmail.com](mailto:rchrnalumnae@gmail.com) if you are unsure of your due's status. Please consider supporting your Alumnae!

Remember to keep me informed when you have an email or address change, a classmate passes away or if you have any news you would like to see in the Newsletter, like reunions.

Enjoy your summer and hopefully we will see you at our next meeting on October 2nd, when we will have a brainstorming session for new ideas for the Archival display.

*Carol Schmidt, Membership, 78B*



# Anniversary Celebrations

This year's AGM/Anniversary celebrations were held at the Scandinavian Centre in Burnaby on June 4, 2025. We had a great turnout with 56 Alumnae in attendance and we were able to take a group photo, which is displayed on page 1. This year we celebrated the 60-year classes of 1965 and the 50-year classes of 1975. Unfortunately, we didn't have any representation from the 70-year classes of 1955. After recognizing the anniversary classes, we enjoyed a lovely tea organized by none other than Louise Johnson 69B. Myrna Bloch and Elain Olsen from 70B were amazing at getting us organized for the group and class photos. Thanks to everyone who contributed to make the celebration a success.



**65B**

*Left to right: Pamela Moores, Ruth Jobson, Beverly Forster, Carol Parker, Myrna Leslie.*



**65A**

*Left to right: Linda Cole, Katherine Clark.*



**75A**

*Top row from left to right: Marilyn Kendall, Kathy Gnapp, Dianne Beggs, Fran Morrison, Linda Brassard, Fran Kuhn, Debbie Sicker, Pam Swanson, Marty Willms, Irene Friesen, Erica Thiessen. Bottom row: Dianna Rennick, Mavis Craig, Denise Tall, Suzanne Grey.*



**75B**

*Standing left to right: Wendy Milne, Kerry Kotecki, Clara Klassen, Melanie Watt. Sitting left to right: Joanne Smyrski, Jeanette Thompson, Betty Johnson.*



## ALUMNAE EXECUTIVE

### *Standing Left to Right*

*Eva Aslin 78B, Treasurer,  
Dianne Obal 78B, Vice-President.*

### *Sitting Left to Right*

*Eileen Brown 78B, President. Carol  
Schmidt 78B, Membership, Diane  
Barnhill 71B, Secretary.*

## 75A Reunion



*Back from left to right: Mavis Craig, Erica Thiessen, Irene Friessen, Fran Morrison,  
Marty Willms, Dianna Rennick. At the front from left to right: Fran Kuhn,  
Linda Brassard, Debbie Sicker, Kathy Gnapp.*

Our first day of our 75A Reunion, started at the RCH Alumni meeting. There were 15 of us! After the meeting we headed to our hotel, The Inn of The Quay in New Westminster, to freshen up and then had dinner at the Boathouse restaurant situated right beside the hotel. The next day we met for a quick coffee and then a walk along the Quay boardwalk. A few of us had to leave as they had only booked one night stay. A group of us took a water taxi to the Queensborough area. We ended up at a great pub for a late lunch. On a funny note, several of us met in Fran, Debbie and Kathy's room on our first night...we were a bit loud (so we were told by security!!). Actually, security knocked on our door twice!!! All in all, we had a wonderful few days to reminisce, laugh, and catch up on each other's lives. Submitted by Fran Kuhn 75A



## 65B & 66A Reunions



**From left to right in the back row:** Dixie Hayduk (McIntosh), Bonnie Tyler (Steenhoff), Darlene Powers (Anderson), Carol Parker (Nidderly), Winkie (Frances) Steele (Bucholtz), Lee Spence (McElroy), Karen Diachuk (Cook), Leona Stefiuk (Scott). **Second row:** Ruth Jobson (Willets), Norma Brett (Sharp), Bev Forester (Maile), Linda Mageau (Elliott), Sandy Pecknold (Mills), Myrna Leslie (Spence). **Front row:** Pat MacDonald (Baynes), Janice Crocker (Bates), Pam Moores (Moores).

### 65B Reunion

The RCH class of 65B came together on May 30th 2025 for a lovely luncheon hosted by a classmate, Winkie Steele at her home in White Rock, supported by other classmates bringing salads and desserts. There were 17 graduates in attendance and we had great fun and lots of reminiscing. Classmates came from all over BC, Washington State and Eastern Canada.

*Submitted By Myrna Leslie 65B*



**Back Row - Left to Right:** Myrna (Dow) Martin, Bev O'Brien, Jane Solly, Elaine (Richmond) Peloquin, Joani (Highfield) Forbes, Wendy (Barton) Best. **Front row - Left to Right:** Joan (Proudfoot) Richards, Sharon (Nickel) Waters, Stephanie (Harding) Higgins.

### Class 66A Reunion

In early June 2025, 9 members of Class 66A gathered at Sorrento Centre in Sorrento, BC for a 2-day reunion, our 7th reunion at this location. We had an amazing time! We didn't stop talking for the entire time, except for when we were sleeping, and then the nights were short. As we were the only group at the Centre at the time and because we were too small a group to have our meals catered, we all contributed to the meals and did we eat well...super salads, chilis, wonderful desserts, muffins and fruit. The weather was perfect so we ate all our meals on the deck in the sunshine. Jane Solly came up with the most entertaining game that really taxed our memory of training days. We tried to remember names of the Head Nurses and Instructors on Wards 1 & 2 North and South and Wards C, D, F and Peds. Also, the names of the House Mothers, the amount we got paid, the number of late passes and times we had to be in at night, when we got our caps, the address of the residence and events around some of the doctors. What fun we had trying to come up with the answers! As next year will be the 60th year since graduating, we plan to have a reunion in New Westminster or Burnaby in conjunction with the Alumnae Tea in June 2026.

*Submitted By Stephanie Higgins 66A*

## 71A Reunion



**Group picture taken at the Hoodoos in Kamloops.**

*From left: Vesta (Wright) Crewe, Wendy (Styles) Parfitt, Anne (Gulliford) Lloyd, Mary Ellen (Dixon) Beamin, Judy (Faryon) Grant, Lynn (Mutter) Doylend, Ellinor (Forsell) MacEwen, Judy (Tyler) Kirk, Liz (Haines) Williamson, Sue (Hartley) James, May Fong (Wong) Geach, Barb (Crittenden) d'Easum, Sue (Chapman) Cadrain, Lynda (McKinnon) Walker, Carol (Falck) Phillips, Brenda (Hanson) Singbeil*

Class 71-A held a reunion/gathering May 2025. Our 50th reunion was interrupted by Covid, so we decided to have a gathering, never mind the number. This is our 54th year!! We had this reunion in Kamloops, as it is central for most of those who attend. We had 16, and were pleased by the turnout. We had day one as a meet & greet in a hospitality room at the Delta Hotel. The Delta Hotel, in downtown Kamloops, was very good....both location, facilities and service. The next day we had a bus tour by Divine Tours. The organizer called it a "monument tour" covering the highlights of Kamloops. It was a two hour plus tour, which covered some of the geographical points of interest.....the guide was very good and told us lots of interesting notes of Kamloops. The evening was again another gathering in a hospitality room, as we had many untold stories to share. A good time had by all. It was so successful we agreed to repeat the program....May of 2027.

*Submitted by Barb d'Easum 71A*



*Starting at the left going back: Karin Ward, Diane Barnhill, Diane Hills, Ruth Karpinski.  
Right side, coming forward: Mary Alice Wood, Emily Thomas, Kathy Sue Goddu, Betty McIntosh.*

## 71B Luncheon

Classmates from 71B met for lunch in May at Ricky's All-Day Grill in Langley. They are making plans for their 55 year reunion in 2026.





## 75B Reunion



*From left to right: Joanne Smyrski, Jeanette Thompson, Anna Gagnon, Karen Anderson, Melanie Watt, Linda Winterhoff, Judy Morris, Emily Hilliard, Betty Johnson, Dianne Laird, Hanny Bath, Wendy Milne, Bianca Christians, Clara Klassen, Sandra Morrison*

## 75B Cruise Reunion

On April 22, 2025, 15 members of the RCH class of 75B celebrated their 50th reunion with a 4-day Holland America cruise, departing Vancouver and visiting Seattle and Victoria before returning to Vancouver. Setting sail on a lovely sunny afternoon, the ladies all enjoyed the Sail Away party on the top deck before dinner. Dinner was a booked seating at two tables allowing us all time to reconnect every evening, and with wine and other beverages dinners were a merry and talkative affair! Our wonderful organizers booked a morning get together in the Crowsnest lounge every morning and skits and guessing things about your fellow classmates were played to much hilarity. The "Nursing - Then and Now" presentation was fun - and one classmate even fit into a grad uniform - which another classmate still had! With spa visits, eating, trivia games, eating, pool time, attending live shows (and yes, more eating and drinking) ship time passed quickly. Shore excursions in Seattle saw some folk visit the Chihuly museum, and on our "at sea" day, we had reserved tables for High Tea, where we all received a commemorative bookmark. For our day in Victoria some went cycling, some visited the BC Museum and some went shopping. We were even able to meet and have lunch with a classmate who lives in Victoria as well. All too soon we were back in Vancouver to disembark. But most agreed it was one of our best reunions ever.

*Submitted By Melanie Watt 75B*



## 67A Reunion

Class 67A gathered in April at the Walnut Beach Resort in Osoyoos to celebrate most of the class having an 80th birthday this year. As always, it was a great time of stories, laughter and cherished memories.

*Submitted By Judy Ross 67A*



**Lower, left to right:** Christine (Nelson) Cunnington, JoAnn (Coleman) Downes, MaryLou (McLeod) Connery, Carol (Rothenbush) Chan. **Upper, left to right:** Judy (Curle) Ross, Diane (Pesme) Johnson, Gloria (Hintz) Moore, Anne (Brinnen) Hume, Diane (Borgal) Leonard, Alice (Lewis) Dalke, Ann (Beauchamp) Clemmons, Carol (Rowell) Mallow, Dona (Winskowski) Klyn.

## Christmas Luncheon 2024





## New Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower Opening Early 2026

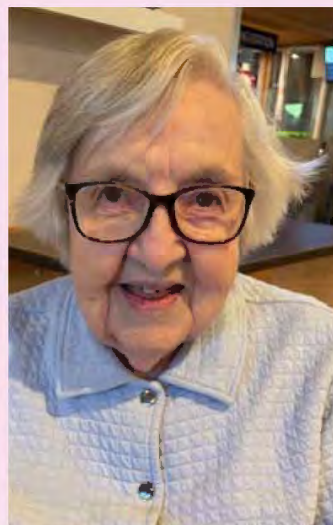
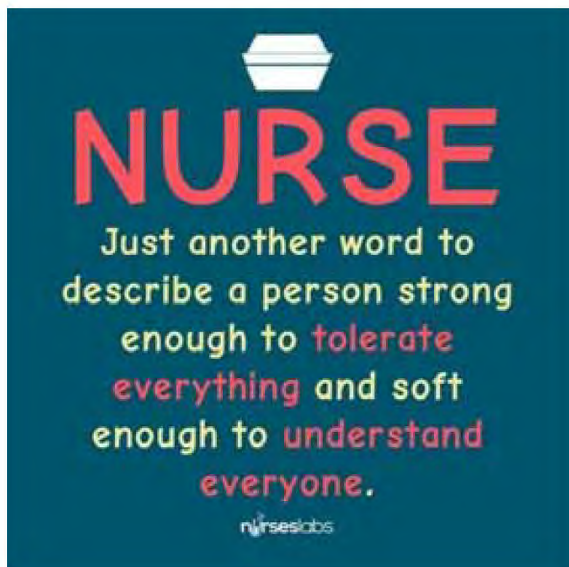
RCH opened its doors in 1862, with just 30 beds and 1 doctor. It has now grown to be a leader in critical care, serving almost 2 million residents. RCH is the only hospital in the province with cardiac, trauma, neurosciences, high risk maternity and NICU on one site. With the completion of the new Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower, slated to open early in 2026, RCH will double its square footage and increase capacity for an additional 11,300 patients per year.

The tower features more beds, private rooms and state of the art equipment and technology. Ten floors of clinical services will include a 75-bay emergency department with a satellite imaging unit, a surgical and interventional “superfloor”, with new OR’s and 2 new maternity OR’s. In addition, there will be 350 new underground parking stalls and a new heli-pad. Now that the construction is substantially complete, the hospital’s support services teams will begin moving into the building this summer, and the project team will outfit the hospital for patients. During the Fall, training and orientation for new and existing RCH clinical staff will begin.

Renovations to existing hospital buildings, to support the increase in services added by the new tower, are also moving forward. Construction of Phase 3 is scheduled to begin later this year. It will include expanded clinical support spaces such as pharmacy, lab, medical imaging and food services.



*Submitted By Carol Schmidt 78B*



### Anne Klassen 50B

Anne, one of our oldest members, will celebrate her 100th birthday on March 4, 2026. She worked with our Secretary Diane Barnhill 71B, in the OR at Lion's Gate Hospital for many years. Diane sees her often when visiting her mother at Lynn Valley Care Centre.

## AWARDS AND BURSARIES

### ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL FOUNDATION: The Gussie MacPhail Award

*Established in 2018, awarded annually through the RCH Foundation, to a nurse employed by RCH who is actively pursuing a BSN, an MSN, NP or Specialty Certification.*

To donate, contact the RCH Foundation at **604-520-4902** or online with this link: <https://rchfoundation.com/rch-nurses-alumnae> Scroll down and you will see Gussie MacPhail Award.

### DOUGLAS COLLEGE FOUNDATION: The Royal Columbian Hospital Nurses Alumnae Award

*Established in 2018, awarded annually through the Douglas College Foundation, to 3rd and 4th year students with exceptional bedside skills. With an additional \$10,000.00 added by Mary Gordon (59B), in 2019, 8 students now qualify annually for the RCH Nurses Alumnae Award.*

To donate, contact the Douglas College Foundation at **604-777-6175** or online with this link: <https://douglascollege.ca/givealumni/foundation/donate-online>. Under Donate, click Fund Designation, Select Other, then specify Royal Columbian Hospital Nurses Alumnae Award. Fill in donor info.

#### Recipients Of Awards

In September 2024, the Gussie MacPhail Award recipient was Ashley Johnson, who is in her 3rd year of her BSc in Nursing. Unfortunately there was a conflict with her student loan and she declined the award. The \$500.00 was reinvested and a new recipient will be chosen in September 2025.

A request had been sent to Douglas College Foundation for the recipients of the The Royal Columbian Hospital Nurses Award. We did not receive an answer before our Newsletter publishing deadline. We will share the information regarding the recipients in our next Fall Update.



## UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

**October 2, 2025**  
**Alumnae Meeting**  
**-Brainstorming Session for Archival Display**  
**St. Michael's Parish, Burnaby**

**December 3, 2025**  
**Christmas Luncheon/Mistletoe Buffet**  
**Vancouver Golf Club**

**March 12, 2026**  
**Alumnae Meeting**  
**St. Michael's Parish, Burnaby**

**June 3, 2026**  
**AGM/Anniversary Celebration**  
**Scandinavian Centre, Burnaby**



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# In Memoriam

## Gone Yet Not Forgotten

Iris Wareham (Wareham)	69B	November 28, 2022
Betty Frederikson (Mead)	59B	October 26, 2023
Loise Seaton (Monford)	49B	January 11, 2024
Rhoda Johnson (Bauer)	55B	February 2, 2024
Margaret Hansen (Jordenais)	57B	March 4, 2024
Ellen Salanski (Whalley)	55B	May 29, 2024
Wendy Smith (Hunter)	76A	June 12, 2024
Ruth Sawatsky (Dyck)	71B	August 7, 2024
Clara Leaman (Miller)	58A	September 23, 2024
Irene O'Connor (Rau)	57A	October 17, 2024
Eleanor Lawrence (Hatcher)	46B	October 19, 2024
Kim Fehr (Saunders)	75A	December 10, 2024
Betty Freeman (Hurl)	48B	December 13, 2024
Margaret Lee Yuen (Pon)	59B	December 16, 2024
Doris Hunter (Maddison)	55A	January 24, 2025
Sirkka Robertson (Halonon)	57A	January 16, 2025
Shirley McGrath (deWynter)	72A	January 28, 2025
Marie Bensley (Smith)	57B	February 20, 2025
Dorothy Hennig (Bird)	54B	March 6, 2025
Betty Ivans (Caldow)	53B	March 23, 2025
Bobbie Manning (MacLachlan)	57A	May 18, 2025
Elaine Sloan (Watson)	62B	June 5, 2025



## MARIE BENSLEY (SMITH)

May 6, 1936 - February 20, 2025

Marie was born in Saskatchewan, but grew up in Chilliwack. After high school she entered training at RCH in the class of 57B. As a student nurse, she met a patient admitted to RCH, named Jim Bensley. Within 4 months of their courtship, they were engaged and then married in a year! They were blessed with 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 1 great grand-child.



After graduation Marie first worked on a medical ward at VGH and then as a private duty nurse for 11 years in the Vancouver area. While working as a private nurse, she had lots of time for knitting for charitable projects. She obtained the wool for free from the Vancouver Unitarian Church and she donated the items to the Unitarian Service Committee. In 1967 Marie heard there were plans to start a new Unitarian Fellowship in the North Shore. Together, the couple, joined the NSUC. Jim became president and Marie was heavily involved in church matters and fund raising. They were instrumental in organizing the Save The Lot Committee. They spent their entire married life living and volunteering on the North Shore.

From 1967 to 1971, Marie left nursing to serve as president of the B.C. Council of Garden Clubs. This was a busy time for Marie, as it was during the creation and naming of the famous VanDusen Gardens. She also produced the Horticultural Judging Manual and started the Garden Councils bi-monthly Bulletin. At this time, she helped initiate schools for horticultural judges, the first Floral Art Club and a Scholarship Fund for the BC Council of Garden Clubs. The fund has disbursed over \$250,000.00 to students in a variety of horticultural related programs at institutions in BC.

Marie decided to return to nursing and worked casual at St. Paul's for 10 years, then decided to take the BCIT refresher course in 1981. Following, she worked another 9 years part-time and casual at VGH and then 13 years of intermediate care nursing at Cedarview Lodge in North Vancouver.

Marie was an active member of the RCH School of Nursing Alumnae, filling the role of Vice-President from 2006-2010. She also instigated the Archive Fund. She played a key role in the Alumnae book project, A Call To Nurse. She contributed her energy, ability to raise funds as well as her amazing husband, Jim, with his talent for writing, editing and proofing.

Marie, you were a "Volunteer Extraordinaire." Thank you for your many years of dedication to nursing and volunteering. Rest in Peace, Marie.

*Submitted By Carol Schmidt 78B*



# The ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL GRADUATING CLASS OF 1975



- TOP LINE:** S. Armstrong, A. Barone, D. Benson, S. Cawley, M. Craig, L. Davies, E. Davis, D. Dolley, L. Downe, D. Dunlop, K. Eddy, K. Ettinger.  
**2ND ROW:** V. Ferguson, E. Fitzgerald, L. Fox, I. Friesen, K. Gardner, Mrs. R. Anderson, Director of School of Nursing, P. Gilbertson, D. Gillard, S. Gray, H. Harms, G. Hikichi  
**3RD ROW:** M. Howell, F. Jean, D. Johnson, B. Killick, N. Kimmel, C. Klassen, W. Lamb, A. Langbroek, K. Lehman, B. Marchetti  
**4TH ROW:** A. Mattson, W. Milne, J. Morgan, J. Morris, F. Morrison, L. Nelson, B. Nichol, H. Penno, P. Petrie, S. Pulham, E. Rempel, D. Rennick.  
**5TH ROW:** L. Roche, K. Saunders, K. Shultz, D. Sicker, L. Senger, J. Sept, B. Skoworodko, D. Smith, E. Stam, M. Steckler, M. Stempien  
**LAST ROW:** P. Swanson, S. Tataryn, N. Telford, E. Thiessen, J. Thompson, L. Turnbull, D. Vikanes, C. White, M. Wilde, M. Wilms, J. Williams, S. Woodhams