



# Nellie DeWitt

DEC 17, 1931 - OCT 7, 2020



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## **Nellie DeWitt**

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**N**ellie A. (Wheeler) DeWitt passed away peacefully at home in the loving arms of her family on October 7th, 2020. Nellie was born in Foreston, New Brunswick, Canada on December 17th, 1931. She was the youngest of five children and grew up on the Wheeler family farmstead. It was a happy life, but certainly tough at times. Nonetheless, she had nothing but incredibly fond memories of her time “back home on the farm” and relished in sharing endless stories with her family. In fact, it was one of these tough times that led her on her life’s journey.

At a young age, Nellie suffered from appendicitis and while her mother was desperately seeking help, her appendix burst. She became quite ill and ended up requiring a long hospital stay. It was at that moment she decided she would become a nurse so that one day she too could care for and help others.

Nellie attended Nursing School in Saint John, New Brunswick, and pursued subsequent training in Montreal, Quebec, and Kitchener, Ontario. After meeting the love of her life, Edward DeWitt, they immigrated to the United States where she continued her nursing career in Massachusetts until her retirement as a Registered Nurse in the ICU and later Telemetry at Hunt Hospital in Danvers, MA.

It is no surprise that Nellie chose nursing as a profession, as caring, compassion, and kindness were the fabric of her being. If you knew her, you loved her. She would do absolutely anything for her loved ones. She was selfless and sweet, yet strong and resilient. She was sincerely one of a kind and it’s no wonder Grampy referred to her so affectionately as “Star”. She was truly the best and we were so fortunate that she was ours to love.

Nellie loved to play cards and board games. On any given day, if you popped in for a visit, there would likely be a scrabble game or a hand of fifty-one in progress. She loved to do crossword puzzles, read crime novels, and watch her “programs” such as The Sopranos. She and Grampy



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never missed an episode of Wheel of Fortune or Jeopardy. While not a die-hard Red Sox fan, she absolutely adored Manny Ramirez, tuning into games just to see “My Manny” as she affectionately called him. She was an avid reader and lifetime learner who diligently added new and interesting information to her “Fact Book”. She loved to use that book to stump us all with her knowledge. “Do you know what a group of Apes is called?” Of course, we didn’t, but we knew she did! She had probably just watched a nature special on National Geographic the night before or read about it in the Reader’s Digest.” It’s called a shrewdness” she would tell you with a sense of excitement. And, in the rare event we taught HER something new, she’d add it to the book.

The Fact Book was written in her beautiful penmanship, as she called it. And it was this same beautiful handwriting that was used to capture her many recipes. Nana was a baker and her pies were hands down the best around. Pecan, pumpkin, and apple were her specialties, but it was her apple pie that we loved the most. Yet, every single time she made it she would warn us “Well, go ahead and try it. It’s probably inedible. I just couldn’t get that (insert your expletive of choice here) crust right this time.” Mind you this was NEVER true, and her apple pie is still the most delicious we’ve ever tasted. We’re sure it was the secret ingredient of love with just a dash of immense frustration that made it so good.

The one thing you most certainly were not when you left Roosevelt Ave., was hungry. Nellie had this insatiable desire to feed you. “Are you hungry? Let me make you something to eat!” “No, Mom/Nana I just ate lunch, but thank you.” “Let me just make you some soup. Or how about a sandwich? I’ll just make you a sandwich WITH some soup. It’ll take me JUST a minute”. “No really, Nana, I’m full.” “Ok, well how about a piece of banana bread then? It just came out of the oven! Let me get that for you. And let me just add some butter. It’s so much better when it’s warm with butter.” And just like that, you’d be stuffed and rolling out of there ready to explode. It’s still amazing to us how much this tiny woman could eat. It’s too bad that most of us didn’t inherit that metabolism!!

Not only did you never leave her house hungry, you never left empty-handed either. Whether it was half the loaf of banana bread she just made or a plate of leftovers from a delicious dinner, you simply couldn’t say no. And it wasn’t just food you were given. Often you would leave with something from the house. There were countless times the kids would have an item in their possession that you’d never seen before and when you asked where it came from, the answer was always, “Oh, Nana gave it to me!” It could have been any number of things from chocolates to costume jewelry or a trinket that the kids mentioned they liked. Home it went with you! You



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couldn't even compliment her on something without her saying "Oh, well, why don't you take it? YOU have it!" "Oh, Mom/Nana, that sweater looks so nice on you!" "Oh, you like it? Why don't you have it?" And believe it or not, there were times she would try and give back to you a gift you JUST gave her! "Oh, bless your heart, it's lovely. You didn't have to do that! Why don't you just keep it for yourself?!" Once we convinced her to keep it, that it was a GIFT and we wanted her to have it, she would say "Oh, you kids spoil me rotten." We only wish she realized how much it was the complete opposite. She spoiled us, in every sense of the word.

Nellie/Mom/Nana/Old Nana/Aunt Nell was simply the best. She had a heart of gold and will forever be remembered for her kindness. She had a wicked sense of humor and always found the comical side of a situation. She was also the first to make light of something that would lift the mood, or poke fun or laugh at herself. We imagine she is now happily reunited with her family that has gone before her, her OG (original "gang"). She was the last one from her generation to re-join them and we know they were waiting with open arms. We are sure they are looking upon us, smiling and proud of what the Wheeler Clan has created.

Nellie is preceded in death by her siblings, Edna, Eloise, Fredrick, and Mary, and their spouses, as well as her loving husband of 65 years, Edward DeWitt. She is survived by her three children: daughter Debbie and husband Kevin Cullen, daughter Jodie and husband Michael Lemish, and son David DeWitt. She leaves behind five grandchildren: Kristen Cullen and husband James McCarty, Kelly Cullen, Craig DeWitt, Peter DeWitt, and Connor Lemish. Last but not least are her four great-grandchildren, Addison and Cian McCarty, Evan Bailey, and Rylie DeWitt. She will also be greatly missed by her many nieces, nephews, and other close family and friends who lovingly referred to her as Aunt Nell.

Nellie had a deep love for animals, stemming from her early days growing up on the farm. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the ASPCA, an organization that was close to her heart.



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Nellie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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