

DUTKA, Joanne Elaine (nee Francis)



It is with immense sadness that the Dutka and Francis families inform you of the passing of Joanne at the age of 52.

Joanne is survived and was much loved and adored by her husband Ken, as well as their sons John, Peter and Alex, her parents Peter and Audrey Francis, her in-laws Jerry and Betty Dutka, her brother John and sister in-law Lois, their children Joy, Amy and Peter, and her brother in-law Andy.

Her demise was sudden, preceded by a courageously fought 13 year battle with breast cancer, an illness she refused to allow to define or impede her. Joanne's struggle was made easier by the kindness shown by the entire Durham legal community, her many friends and relatives, her devoted legal assistants Tara and Judy, her sisters with the Dragon Flies – a cancer survivor dragon boat team, as well as the unwavering support of her friends Pat, Paul, Ron, Susan and her "big sister" Carole and her husband Mike.

Except for her many world travels and time away for university Joanne lived virtually her entire life in Oshawa and Port Perry. She was born and blessed with an easy manner, preternaturally gifted in almost every way. Growing up she became an accomplished water and snow skier, becoming a ski instructor. She avidly started collecting antiques in her early teens, later buying and selling them with Ken to pay for law school. Joanne was academically gifted, accepted for law school when she was 19, called to the Bar when she was 23.

For more than 25 years she practiced in Oshawa with Ken, providing legal services as a mediator and private counsel, as well as an agent for the Office of the Children's Lawyer and the FRO. Joanne regularly provided pro-bono services to the disadvantaged. She was a founding member of the Collaborative Law Association of Durham.

Joanne was always eager to learn new things and over the past 30 years became a stained glass artist, wedding photographer, antique vendor, painter, knitter, website designer, duplicate bridge player, and accomplished golfer. As her illness progressed she travelled regularly, experiencing the sites and cities of the world.

Joanne was a massive contributor to the local community, acting as a coach, coordinator and convener for Port Perry hockey and soccer, and regularly contributing to the sports section of the local papers. She was most proud of her founding affiliation with two local charities, Durham Youth Housing, a shelter for homeless youth, and of course the Dragon Flies, especially by assisting the latter with the establishing of an annual Dragon Boat Festival in Port Perry.

Joanne's passing leaves a void that is keenly felt by all and impossible to fill.

Joanne's life will be remembered and celebrated on Saturday, July 24th at **BARNES MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME**, 5295 Thickson Rd North, Whitby, Ontario (905-655-3662). A memorial visitation will take place from 11:30 to 1:00pm, with an informal memorial service to follow thereafter.

In lieu of flowers contributions to the Dragon Flies or Durham Youth and Housing Services would be appreciated.