

Judith Bisset

29th March 1944 to 24th April 2023

Ardsley Crematorium, Barnsley

Wednesday 24th May at 2.50pm

Entrance Music - Precious Years, Runrig

Welcoming Words

Good afternoon everyone and welcome as we gather to say a fond farewell to the wonderfully strong character that was Judith Bisset; lost to us on the 24th of April at the age of 79.

On behalf of Judith's dear daughter, Raychel and her family, I welcome you all to this first part of the proceedings, as we create a special time to honour Judith's life and say our farewells. Judith's sudden passing has come as a great shock to her loved ones, and your support at this time is very much appreciated. Thank you.

There are some who are unable to be here with us today, including Judith's best friend from school in Derby, Avis, who isn't well enough to travel. However, her daughter, Carrie is here on her behalf. Also Judith's friend Christine, who is on holiday, and friends Sheila and Glen. We know that they too will be thinking of Judith, and holding you, her loved ones, close to their hearts.

Judith loved and was loved in return by all. Her spirit and her life were, and still are a part of your spirit and life, and although you mourn her loss today, there is something of her that remains – her influence has not ended with her physical death. Her strength, her love and her values were offered and shared and they have become a living part of you.

So today, yes, we grieve Judith's passing, but as we do so, we also celebrate her life. After all, there is a lot to celebrate about the life of someone who not only survived, but thrived, against all odds.

Remembering Judith

The daughter of Vera and Wilfred Wade, and younger sister to Trevor, Judith was born on the 29th of March 1944.

Born with spina bifida, Vera and Wilfred were dealt the news that their daughter would not live beyond her teenage years.

Vera sadly passed away when Judith was four, and Trevor fourteen years old. Wilfred, who worked as an engine driver, was unable to look after a disabled child, so Judith went to live with relatives for many years, before moving to St Christophers Railway Servants' Orphanage, in Derby, when she was 10 years old.

Judith's experience of being at the orphanage was a positive one. She acknowledged that because of her disability, and the loss of her Mum, she had been spoiled by her family, but that once in the home, she was put in her place. This was something that she saw as a good thing. It gave her the confidence to know that she could do things for herself and contributed to her balanced and fair outlook on life. Judith never felt that the world owed her a favour. She had so many good memories from those years, including the tale that she liked to tell of how, on the happy occasions that they had buns with their meals, they would be placed on the table whilst they ate their food, and how she and the other children would stake their claim on one, by sticking their finger in it! Judith would keep in touch with the friends she made at the orphanage, at the regular reunions that she organised for many years, taking the opportunity, at the same time, to go and see Avis, her best friend from where she had gone to school, in Derby.

Judith met Barrie on New Years' Eve 1961. They were engaged the following year, and by the year after, on the 21st of December 1963, they were married.

Judith worked at George Royston, where she and Barrie, alongside Jackie and Tony, Linda and Barry and Margaret and James became known as The Gang.

On the 14th of January 1969, Judith and Barrie welcomed a daughter, Rachel Anne, born by planned caesarean section due to Judith's spina bifida. This was despite Judith having been told that she would never have children. She certainly proved them wrong!

The Gang also had children around the same time. Together, their families spent many happy times on holiday over the years and enjoyed lots of parties and get-togethers at each other's homes.

In June of 1978 Judith's Dad, Wilf, sadly passed away and at around the same time, Barrie was taken ill. Diagnosed with renal failure, he was put on kidney dialysis. A few years later, he got his own portacabin at home, and was dialysed from there from then on. In 1983 he would go on to have a kidney transplant, which failed, and made him very poorly indeed. So much so that he nearly lost his life.

Judith and Barrie supported Raychel's studies at Huddersfield Polytechnic, where she studied graphic design. They were very proud of her when she graduated, in 1990.

In 1993, Raychel married Steve Perks, which brought along a whole new family for Judith and Barrie, including Steve's daughters Lisa and Sarah, who called Judith 'Little Gran' as she was only 4 feet 4½ inches tall.

Raychel and Steve's son, Lee Alexander, was born in 1995. As a boy, Lee spent a lot of time with his Grandma, or G-Ma, as he called her, often said with a fist bump, and the two of them were very close. Raychel told me that he certainly got away with a lot more than she ever did! She has fond memories of Mum letting Lee and neighbour Kieran fill up water balloons and throw them at each other in the street. The arrival of a great grandson, baby Oliver, was a source of great joy for Judith. She adored him, proudly showing everyone the photos that she had of him on her phone.

Barrie sadly passed away in October of 2000, as a result of complications of renal failure. And, when Raychel and Steve separated, in 2001, Raychel moved in with her Mum for six months. As ever, the two of them supported each other, and got on with it. Judith never let anything get her down, although she did have some difficult times, over the years, living alone.

In 2004, Judith met Ian, who she would go on to marry in 2008. Meanwhile, in 2006, Raychel met Steve McGuin, and they married in 2011. Judith joked with him about being another Steve, and he used to wind her up right back, which Judith, who loved to have a good laugh and a joke, always enjoyed.

Judith enjoyed lots of holidays abroad, and, despite Judith's disabilities, they managed really well. However, Ian suffered back problems and after a fall, in 2019, Raychel had to care for both of them. The following year, one which no one will forget in a hurry - 2020, the Covid year, was hard, but they managed.

When Ian passed away in December 2020, Raychel and Steve began plans to convert their house to create an annexe for Judith to move into. The project was finally finished in August of 2022 and Judith moved in. Although sad to leave her own home, especially her good neighbours Stacey and David, she was looking forward to new adventures.

Judith spent many happy days with friends in her new home. Her cousin, Averil, took her to the U3A Choir each week, and she received lots of lovely visitors; her cousin Patricia, her longstanding friends Jackie and Linda, friends from Wives' Group Kathleen, Margaret and Helen, and Stitches friend Christine, plus Angie, her cleaner, Joanne, her hairdresser, and Louise, who did her nails. She also very much enjoyed a wonderful visit from her brother Trevor and his partner Rose, who all managed to see her settled and happy in her new home with her beloved cat Smokey, who she got as a rescue and who was such good company for her, after Ian passed away; Judith doted on him. Everyone will be relieved to hear that Smokey is coping well, and is being taken very good care of, by Raychel and Steve.

Judith and Raychel were a great team. Good friends, as well as mother and daughter, they got on with things together, and had an open and honest relationship throughout the years. For Judith's 70th birthday Raychel gifted her Mum the promise of them going out together on the first Wednesday of every month. 9 years later, when Judith was physically up to it, they were still carrying on that tradition, whether going shopping or to the theatre, they always had a good time.

It was at the end of a fabulous weekend break at Thoresby Hall with her friend, Jackie, that Judith suffered a heart attack. Despite being rushed to the cardiac unit at Nottingham City Hospital, where emergency surgery was

planned, Judith passed away peacefully at 6am, on the morning of the 24th of April, with Jackie remaining by her side until Raychel and Steve arrived.

A simply lovely lady, she is missed more than words can say.

Music For Reflection - Songs of Life, Neil Diamond

Now, as we listen to his beautiful piece of music, I invite you to recall your own memories of Judith and times spent with her.

Those of you with faith may wish to use this time for private prayer.

Judith was a massive Neil Diamond fan, and Raychel chose this song in particular because she has such lovely memories of sitting and watching the film, *The Jazz Singer*, which this song is from, with her Mum, so many times.

The Lord's Prayer:

The Committal and Farewell

The time has come for us to say our goodbyes to Judith.

Judith we now gently release your earthly body, which served you beyond all expectations, to its natural end, and we commend your soul to God's keeping.

As we do so, we say a heartfelt thank you,
For the richness of your life,
For the window that you opened in our hearts

For the pleasure of your friendship, which will forever be with us
And for inspiring each of us to live our own lives to the full

Judith you are loved, you are missed. You will be remembered always.

Poem – The Clock Still Ticks, written by Raychel McGuin

The clock still ticks,
Plants still grow,
Dust settles,
But everything has changed.

Sunlight touches familiar belongings,
Yet they have no one to belong to.

Sympathy cards adorn the window ledge,
The picture frame to a world that still turns.

Books half read, projects incomplete,
It's so final.
There's no more "In a minute" or "I'll do it soon".
It's just done.

Memento Mori - remember we too will die,
We must live, now.

Closing Words

We have been remembering Judith's life, and we have said our farewells.

Although it's true that your lives will never be quite the same again without Judith's physical presence, Judith lives on in your hearts and memories. Each of you will carry a part of you with her throughout your own lives.

On behalf of Raychel and her family, I thank you again for being here with them. I am also asked to extend a very warm welcome to everyone to join them after this ceremony at Emmanuel Methodist Church at Barnsley, where Judith used to attend the U3A choir, and where she will continue to be remembered in a true celebration of her life, with music from the choir, and many more lovely memories to be shared.

For those who would like to make a donation in Judith's memory, they are welcomed on behalf of The Urban Commune, Wakefield, a creative wellbeing hub for emotional wellbeing for artists and creative that Raychel founded. Judith was always a huge supporter of the project and enjoyed attending the Yarn circle there on Saturdays. If you would like to contribute you will see a donation box at the exit.

Now, as we prepare to leave, we will listen to the final choice of music for today. As we do so, please remain seated and take a moment to gather your thoughts until you are invited to leave.

Music to leave - Goodbye, Kenny Rogers

