



**REMEMBERING**  
**Helen Terhljan**

June 12, 1964 - May 13, 2022



Helen Theresa Terhljan, age 57, died on May 13th, 2022. A funeral mass was held at 2pm on June 8th, 2022 at St Edward's Church. A party in Helen's honour was held immediately after the service at her home in Duncan BC. In true Helen fashion, all were welcome.

Helen was born on June 12th 1964 in Hamilton, Ontario to Stan and Margaret (Somerville) Terhljan. She is survived by her loving husband of 31 years, Victor Ehmann, daughter Julia Ehmann of Duncan, daughter Danielle Ehmann of Kelowna, grandson Cashton Ehmann and 4 siblings: Joey Terhljan (Cathy) of Thunder Bay , Ont., Steve Terhljan (Merle) of Dundas, Ont, Bill Terhljan of Dundas, Ont and Anne-Marie Adams [Stuart] of Souris, Manitoba. Helen made strong connections with relatives in Slovenia, the place of her father's birth and a country Helen loved. Helen is predeceased by her father, Stan Terhljan, her mother Margaret Terhljan, step father Douglas Kinch, Canadian grandparents Raymond and Cecelia Sommerville, Uncles Harry and Raymond Sommerville. Helen met the love of her life, Vic Ehmann, in June of 1991. Helen had stopped into Kelowna to visit her parents. She was on her way to China. Vic immediately knew Helen was special and used all his charms to get her to stay. He was successful enough that she eventually agreed to marry. It was a 31 year long love story. Helen and Vic were complementary souls. Together they did anything and everything from exploring the world to raising 2 daughters and a grandson. Helen's love for Vic was great and deep. She always said Vic's hippie balanced her high energy. They both loved travel, family, friends and fun. Helen was famous for graciously hosting epic parties for every occasion. She loved good people, good food and good wine. Whether the gathering be big or small, Helen welcomed everyone with a wide smile

and a big hug. She always made things fun. She was an exceptional, caring and loving step mother. She enjoyed the house full of the girls and their friends. Julia always felt such gratitude that Helen made the loving decision to choose us to be her family and raise us as her own.

Helen was smart. She achieved distinction in all her university training, first at McMaster University where she obtained a Bachelor of Physical and Health Education Degree with a minor in French. She then went to University of Toronto for her Bachelor of Education degree (Intermediate/Senior French and PE). In 1995 she went on to complete her MA in Education and Curriculum at Gonzaga University. Helen was always involved in furthering her education, especially in foreign languages which she taught in middle and senior high schools. She completed her TESL from Oxford University. She spent a year in Germany studying German language and culture. She also later attended the Goethe-Institut in Berlin Germany. Her education continued with immersions in Spain, Mexico, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba, France, Quebec and Germany.

Helen taught for over 30 years. In Kelowna in 1991, she was hired by Immaculata High School where she taught Outdoor Education. She instructed in "Beyond The Walls", an Experiential Alternate Education Programme whereby students would travel, on a converted bus, to Mexico or across Canada to study the geography, language and culture by being immersed in it. This also applied to the political and social study of the places they visited. Helen moved to the public system in Kelowna where she first taught at Rutland Middle School from 1993 to 1997. She taught French, PE and started the Spanish Dept there. From 1997 to 2002 she taught at KLO Middle and Secondary where she created the Spanish and Outdoor Education Programmes. She also taught French, German, Spanish and Outdoor Education in her time there. From 2004 to 2018 Helen was at Ecole Kelowna Secondary, a school of over 2000 students, where she was Spanish Dept head and dramatically increased the number of students studying that language.

In the summer of 2018 Helen, Vic and Cashton moved to Duncan. From 2018 until 2020 Helen taught for SD 79, first as an ESL Teacher for the International Student Program, then as a District Itinerant ELL teacher. Unfortunately Helen's cancer forced her to stop teaching professionally, a career she loved, but she never stopped teaching those closest to her. Helen was an ethical and much loved teacher and her passing is a great loss to the school system.

Outside of school Helen was a DYNAMO. She loved to travel. A partial list of countries includes: Italy (9 times), France, Germany, Spain, Morocco, Austria, Slovenia, Australia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, China, Portugal, Ireland, United Kingdom, United States, Mexico, British Virgin Islands, Nicaragua, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Cuba, Ecuador and Colombia. Her language skills and street smarts made Helen the best travel partner. She could navigate cities, walking of course, and connect with local cultures like no other.

Helen loved the outdoors. She loved to hike. Helen was an experienced mountaineer, rock and ice climber. She was also a scuba diver, canoeist and sailor. Helen also loved to bike... both road and mountain. She was fearless! Helen so enjoyed mountain biking with friends in the Okanagan. She was a proficient and

experienced motorcyclist. She loved her GS 500 but was so fast on her CBR 500 RR! She loved to sport tour which she and Vic did every year. Helen also rode dirt bikes. As a mountain biker she learned much that helped her in the dirt and on mountains. She out rode Vic on her dirt bikes! What a joy it was to ride with her! She liked the Okanagan but grew to love the Cowichan Valley more. Opportunities for hiking, sailing, mountain biking and to explore the natural beauty of Vancouver Island truly enticed her.

Helen was dynamic, determined and smart. She was also beautiful and a sharp dresser! Helen lived life to the fullest. She was so dynamic! Her energy was infectious. She was a leader. She was a true and loyal friend. She loved deeply and honestly. Her friendships were many, deep and lasting. Helen loved and was loved. Her friend Suzan speaks for all who knew her:

"Helen will forever hold a special place in my heart. She taught me early on, the importance of keeping in touch and giving space for friendships to carry on, no matter the distance our paths take. I shall be forever grateful for this lesson and her friendship. Our shared experiences were always a pleasure. She never judged, was always supportive and displayed immense understanding when that be exactly what I needed because she genuinely cared. She lived in love by every action and example and maintained an incredibly positive attitude through thick and thin. I always admired her zest for life, joy for travel, and her view of any adventure that life granted her, be they big or small, as a gift to behold and appreciate...she lived by example. Her smile could light up any room and her kindness and care for others was evident in all the ways she chose to live her personal and work life. Her love for her family was obvious and will live on eternally. She was an inspiration and a trusted friend. Helen was beautiful inside and out. She was Wonder Woman...so much so I find it hard to believe she is gone. My heart is broken that she suffered pain and that she was taken from those she loved and loved her far too early. An Angel has however risen with her passing. And I know she looks upon us all. I feel blessed to have known Helen. I hope we connect again on the other side dear friend. Until then, you remain forever young, forever fun, forever love in my heart. RIP sweet soul. Thank you for your friendship."

