

MARNIE JENSEN



Marnie passed away on 31st August 2001 at the age of 56.

Marnie and I were introduced to each other in 1992. I had just been diagnosed with breast cancer and Marnie was a 6-year survivor who came to support me through treatment. During the next nine years our friendship grew as we shared many common interests in our lives.

Becoming a member of Abreast in a Boat, well, it just kind of happened ... as we attended a breast cancer conference in Vancouver we got separated. As she caught up with me, Marnie said quietly, “Do you see that booth over there?” I said “Yes, where the ladies in the pink t-shirts are standing.” She answered “You know that some of them are our age and they’re dragonboating.” I said, “How nice, isn’t that courageous.” She said “Well, I signed us up!!”

Going to our first Abreast in a Boat meeting in Jan 2000, we were very excited ... had visions of tremendous weight loss and muscle building. When it ended, we drove home silently. We had come to learn that by joining something like this we were really dealing with our disease and its challenges. However, we also could see we were joining the ranks of an incredible group of women with a common bond and the dragon boat racing was a bonus! Unfortunately, Marnie never actually got to paddle, as two months before training started in 2000 she had a recurrence of her breast cancer.

When Marnie learned she had a short time to live, she set herself three goals to achieve—to sing with the Richmond Singers at their concert in May, to participate in the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival in June with her team mates on “More or Less Abreast”, and to enjoy a month of summer. With great courage and perseverance she reached all three goals. Although too weak to paddle, she became the drummer, never missing a practise and found joy on the water with her friends even when very ill. She was an inspiration to all who knew her. The last time Marnie left her bed was to attend the crew celebration party a few days after the festival.

Marnie was born in 1945 in Moncton, N.B. and worked for Canadian Airlines for 20 years. She was a gentle, soft-spoken but outgoing person, who took a real interest in everyone she met. She enjoyed gardening and flowers and loved to sing. She left a loving family—her husband Fred and two daughters, Michelle and Susannah.

- Lyn Scott