

SHEILA KERFOOT



Sheila received her initial diagnosis in 2009; after finishing treatment, she received a clean bill of health and joined the Rocky Point crew in 2012. Her crew valued her athletic ability, zany sense of humour, interesting stories, musical talent and overall zest for life. She also served on the AIAB board as electronic archivist and implemented our shared Google Drive.

Although Sheila did not paddle during the 2013 season, she accompanied her Rocky Point crew to the Portland Rose Festival Regatta to provide balance in the boat. Rumour has it her Portland roomies would tease her about how long it took to put her face on in the morning—she always was perfectly

turned out and even managed to find a charming tiara for the 20th anniversary celebration. She rejoined the Rocky Point crew for a stellar 2014 season.

Late in 2014, Sheila received the devastating news that her cancer had metastasized. Since she was undergoing treatment, she was unable to paddle during the 2015 season but she cheerfully travelled from Surrey to Port Moody to cheer us on during practice and to help out our manager.

During the spring of 2015, she kept us apprised of her ongoing treatments and gladdened our hearts by posting about amazing outings with her husband Steve and daughter Laura. Sheila loved a good prank and none of her crew ever will forget the moment she doffed her wig to pose bald-headed for a crazy team photo.

In the summer, Sheila accompanied some of her crew on a weekend getaway to Gabriola Island where she rode tandem in the guide's kayak in rough chop with an ear-to-ear grin plastered on her face. Mere weeks before she passed, she and her family participated in the 2015 CIBC Run for the Cure and their fierce devotion and joie de vivre were never more apparent. Sheila squeezed every last drop of joy out of life!

The Rocky Point crew held a memorial paddle for Sheila during which coach Deb Middleton read the following poem:

I see a flower
It is so nice

I look out over the water
And I think I am in paradise

The horizon is so far
Abundance galore
We step into the boat
And paddle to the other shore

We use our energy
We paddle as a team
Women united
We fulfill a dream

Upper body exercise
It was a taboo
Cancer made us weak
But we proved that dragon boating we could do

We raise breast cancer awareness
We get stronger by the day
Maybe our lives are short
Maybe for a long time we stay

We hug, we cry, we laugh
Mind over matter
Our spirits are high
We learn, we play, we pull together.

Rosa van der Zwan,
Breast Cancer Survivor

- Judy Buss