

Eulogy of Elizabeth C. Murphy 'Betty' 30th June 2021 by Anne-Marie Murphy.

Born Elizabeth Concepta Murphy on 31st December 1939 to James Joseph Murphy and Eileen Monks, Betty was raised on farms, firstly in Primrose Park, Raheny, Dublin, and later in Ballyhagen Co. Kildare. She was the youngest of a family of three children, and adored her older brothers Tom and Pat.

Animals were always part of her life and in addition to the family working sheepdog, she always had a dog of her own, usually a cross breed and the usual pets, rabbits, bantam hens, etc.

Betty worked as a Medical photographer in St Stephens hospital and later had a Photographic Studio 'Studio M' at 88 St Stephens Green, which many of the family were fortunate to access in those days, both in front of and behind the camera.

We have wonderful cine footage of the early years and all the family so enjoyed those home cinema showings. Betty always had a camera slung over a shoulder in those days and our families and the wolfhound club have benefited greatly from those fabulous photographic and video records.

When Tom and Pat married Cepta and Anne, Betty was included in every family gathering and celebration. She is there in all the photographs, supporting and encouraging each child and being a very much loved and active Aunt. The excitement when Betty would arrive at our house and open her car boot to release the hounds.

High tea with its glorious spread of sandwiches, cold cuts and cakes, was a highlight for us all when we were young .A speciality of Grans both in Ballyhagan and Ardeevin Ave. It later became a regular Sunday event that Betty would host.

Betty loved to be a part of all family life and nurtured many hobbies within us, including photography and stamp collecting, she had so many friend from exotic locations her stamp box was always a treasure trove. She was always seen by us as this incredible independent woman who was off travelling the world and bringing back stories and gifts from those far off lands. What an inspiration for our young minds.

She had a great passion for getting on with things and described herself in a recent interview as 'being on fire to change the world as a young woman'.

When living at Ballyhagan, she had the time and space to fully commit to breeding and judging her beloved Irish Wolfhounds, she also had many other dogs along her journey, including but not limited to Irish red setters and Glen of Imaals, this furthered her passion to all the Irish Breeds but she only ever bred Irish Wolfhounds.

When her father died her world changed and she moved to Ardeevin Avenue to care for her mother. She was kind and generous with her time and her deeds. She also began to reinvent herself as for the first time in her life she lived in a housing estate. She set up Lucan dog grooming in the garage of number 10. Her bravery to my mind knew no bounds.

Our days out as nieces and nephews with Betty were exciting trips to all sorts places often associated with wolfhounds or Irish history. Our trips were usually one on one so each of us had developed own special relationship with our inspiring Aunt. There are so many stories to be shared and we treasured them all.

She loved flowers and beautiful plants and as she said herself 'plenty of colour'. She definitely inherited grans love of Blossom, although she preferred to enjoy the results of gardening rather than the toil itself. Many is the day we had visiting stunning gardens and places of scenic beauty. Most of us would have some of Betty's famous white peace lily, which is flowering magnificently in her gardens at the moment. She proudly gifted excesses of them on to people each year.

She then moved to Carrokeel lodge where Her love of and involvement with all things 'doggy' extended to her building and running a boarding kennels and continuing her dog grooming business through which she made additional friendships and connections.

Betty's extended wolfhound family played a major part in her life and she made lifelong friends through her beloved wolfhounds.

Betty's involvement with wolfhounds began when she was in her twenties and her father wisely advised that until she had read up and studied the breed she shouldn't get a wolfhound. This advice was to stand the test of time and serve her well as she went on to become a judge and world recognised authority on the Irish wolfhound breed. Betty's first puppy Siobhan (Ch Ballykelly Sile of Carrokeel) bought through Sheelagh Seale, was bred by John Briggs. Sheelagh was kind enough to allow her to buy an older puppy, Ballykelly Eilish, to keep Siobhan company.

Having a trained photographer's eye was what gave Betty the ability to pick up on the finer nuances of a dog's conformation. This was to form a recurring theme as it is safe to say that her life's work has been the promotion of the breed and the preservation of Graham's breed standard. Given that the Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland is the mother club and holds the breed standard nothing could change with the standard without going back to Betty and Jimmy – both of whom willingly accepted this responsibility.

In this regard Betty was involved with and led many national and international committees. She worked actively with the Irish Kennel Club for over 50 years and was Patron and a former President of the Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland.

Betty was a very successful breeder and her kennel name Carrokeel featured largely in the register of national champions. The pups that were bred from these hounds were greatly sought after, both nationally and internationally and went on to become champions in their own right.

One of the occasions that gave Betty great pleasure was when her dog Gwernyfed Lleigus of Carrokeel (pronounced Claygus) and commonly known as Shane, carried out the role of national mascot for the Irish team at the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

She was a founding member and Honorary President of the European Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs, since its inception in 1994, and over the intervening years to the point where now it has a worldwide presence and is known to us all as the Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs.

Betty was interviewed on radio and television both here and internationally on numerous occasions, was a great woman for straight talking she was not afraid to protect her beloved wolfhound breed during interviews and through her work on committees.

Betty was always so outward looking and progressive. She was a woman ahead of her time and actively engaged with all forms of new technology. In this regard she digitised all the club's historical archives. This philanthropic work is a testament to her desire to enhance the knowledge of the Irish wolfhound breed and make it available to members of the club and public alike.

Betty was an accomplished author with a number of books to her name. However, she will be best remembered for her book simply called 'The Irish Wolfhound'. While the name of this book may be simple the book is a wealth of knowledge for both the novice owner and experienced breeder alike. Her book is an authoritative text on the breed and is the bible for first time Irish wolfhound owners.

Although Betty's first love was the Irish Wolfhound she was also an advocate and champion for the 9 native breeds of Ireland through her work with the Irish Breeds Society and the Hound Association of Ireland.

Betty had a great insight into human nature, she was able to negotiate through the many different personalities in a variety of situations in both her personal and professional life. "when Betty was involved – it got done" and "What she started she finished", Betty was enormously accomplished and achieved so much in her lifetime, this is a snippet of that journey.

There are too many friends to name here, but suffice to say that we all had our own special relationship with Betty and those she loved and respected knew it. So for each of us, we can hold those memories close and remain inspired by her kindness, thoughtfulness and determination, As an Daughter, Sister, Aunt, relation, friend and neighbour, she was admired, respected and loved.

To our beloved Betty, Elizabeth C Murphy, and the First Lady of Irish Wolfhounds – Thank you. Our memories are our wealth and our lives will be dimmer without you.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis. 'may her holy soul be on the right side of God'

