

I am one of Alice's many nieces. It is my privilege and honor to speak a bit about the daughter, wife, mother, sister, aunt and grandmother, that I simply knew as Auntie Alice. I will share what I can about the 97 years that she has spent loving her family.

When I was small, I knew Auntie Alice as a magician. Walking into her kitchen, a magic wand was waved and delicious things popped out of her refrigerator. A trek down to the basement in Derwent meant a long table laden with amazing food and surrounded by family. It was disappointing to learn, coming from a strong Ukrainian family, where so much focus was on family gathering and food, that this magic was not in every house!

Alice was born on September 28, 1924 at Soda Lake (near Willingdon) to John and Rachilia Oneschuk. She was the youngest of 5 children, and on her birth certificate, she was called Elizabetha. While attending Pruth School, a teacher called her Alice (not to be confused with other Elizabeths), and she was hence known as Alice. From that time on, she honored her name by going by Alice Elizabeth or Alice E.

Alice was a skilled teacher. She taught for 33 years, after attending one-year of teacher training at Edmonton Normal School. She worked in various schools, from a one room school house in Flatbush, to schools in Two Hills County, including Derwent school, from which she retired in 1987.

Alice married Steve Wysocki in 1951, whom she met while teaching in Derwent. She was active in her community, a member of the Royal Purple and the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League.

The light of Auntie Alice and Uncle Steve's lives were their two daughters, Cheryl (1963) and Audrey (1966). These beautiful girls were Auntie's Alice's life, and she paused her teaching career for 10 years to raise them. When Steve passed suddenly in 1975, Alice was left to singlehandedly teach, parent, and work towards her education degree.

When I asked Audrey and Cheryl to tell me something I did not know about their mom, I was delighted to learn she was a huge curling fan. When she was young, she curled. As she got older, she watched curling with nearly religious zeal. It was difficult to separate her from the game, if someone dropped by in the middle of match.

Alice moved from Derwent to Vegreville in 1998 to be closer to her family. She travelled extensively during her Vegreville based years with her sisters-in-law, Mary and Marie, and dear friend Elsie Mudryk. Alice enjoyed travels to Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, the Holy Land, Europe, Ukraine, and even the Galapagos Islands.

Alice settled in Edmonton in 2017.

Many of us were so happy to share in the highlight event of her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2019. It was so amazing to hear Aunt Alice share her experiences helping out on the Wysocki farm during harvest, while still completing her own chores and prep at the end of a busy work day. We were in awe of her work ethic, energy and willingness to help.

Even in her nineties, Alice wrote her Christmas cards in perfect penmanship. There was always a personal note that ensured the connection was strong. And she continued to read and write in a journal well into her late nineties.

A happy memory of mine, during the darker days of COVID Alice was admitted to the Misericordia Hospital. Despite the visitor restrictions, I could slip up at lunch time to visit. She always recognized me (masked and shielded), chatted, and wanted the family news.

Family always came first for Auntie Alice. I asked her children share a significant memory with me.

**From Cheryl :** When I think of my favorite memories of Mom, it takes me back to my childhood and it is difficult to pick just one. She was a supermom who could do it all - Birthday cakes, gardening, family gatherings, and a full-time teaching career. I always loved to be in the kitchen when she was baking, especially when it was Easter Bread. She treated the ritual with such reverence. It began with gathering all the large tomato and apple juice tins that she saved from year to year. She had a beautiful gigantic enamel bowl that she prepared the dough in by hand, including kneading and punching the dough at regular intervals. (No mixmasters or bread machines could even come close). As the bread came out of the oven, she placed the numerous mushroom shaped babka on a clean cloth on our bed to cool. The bed was filled with fresh babka - what an aroma! She also lovingly made her braids for the paska and once baked, they got whisked away. Several of the "best looking" loaves were chosen for the Easter Basket to be blessed and then we patiently waited until Easter Sunday when we could partake in that special ritual of Easter Breakfast with Mom's heavenly bread.

**Audrey shared:** "How do you choose a favorite memory in a 55 year relationship? One memory that stands out and I believe, speaks volumes, is driving back from Vermilion. I was 4 or 5 years old. For some reason, I was distressed about something, so Mom was holding me on her lap (waaay before seatbelt laws). I believe Aunty Patti Onysyk was driving so they were chatting with one another as they did. My head was resting on Mom's chest and whenever she spoke, I was comforted to hear her voice muffled through her chest. It seems like such an insignificant moment, but that flashpoint memory has comforted me many times throughout my life. As we watched her slip away, I thought of putting my head on her chest one last time, but then didn't because it wouldn't be her voice."

Cheryl and Audrey asked me to stress that Alice died peacefully, with both of her girls at her side.

Alice adored her 3 grandchildren. I asked about special Baba memories, her grandchildren happily obliged.

**Jeff** remembers that she was a formidable reader, and years as a teacher made Alice a wordsmith. She loved to play Jeff in scramble, even in her later years. And she was known to best her grad-school educated grandson!

In the summer of 2017, Jeff stayed with Baba over the summer after she had lost her driver's license and this is what she had wrote to him on August 29, 2017:

"My first words that come to mind is the gratitude and appreciation for having you live with me when I lost my driver's license after my health event. It was so comforting to be with you to help me. I wish you lots of luck in your new endeavor. May God guide your path. Love you dearly! Baba"

**Amanda** said her favourite memory growing up was making the trek out to Vegreville to spend Easter with Baba. We'd decorate Easter eggs, make jello eggs, go to the beautiful Ukrainian Catholic Church, and go hunting for eggs on Easter morning. The highlight was always being able to eat her delicious homemade pickles.

**Noel:** Some of my favorite memories of Baba is when we gathered to play games with her. And she would actually stop running around the kitchen for the entire dinner to service us and actually sit with us and play! I also loved the time that I was staying with her and she would sit and do school work with me.

We were on our way to Penticton and she got all excited about the corn field we passed and had to tell me and Sean how there was corn in the field. Because it was a corn field!

Alice was excited at the news that she was to be a great grandmother. Noel and Angel were looking forward to sharing their son, a great grandson for Alice, in September. And in a few moments, we will see a special photo tribute Noel has prepared for his Baba.

Today we honour a life well lived and an amazing woman who loved and cared deeply for her family and friends. And who's passing fills us with gratitude for her love and the comfort of the memories of her life with us. And her legacy strengthens us in our grief. **Vichnaya Pam'yat.**