



Trevor and Linda's Story

Linda and Trevor first met decades ago while working together as colleagues, and friends. Many years later, after both were no longer in relationships, their friendship grew and they became partners in business and in life. In the end, it would be his tremendous love and strength that would give her the power she needed to fulfill his last wishes.

Trevor was, by all accounts, an active man playing rugby well into his 60s and golfed until he was bedridden. His British "stiff upper lip" background combined with a very high tolerance for pain, facilitated his determination to initially ignore his illness, beat it and then die the way he wanted. Having witnessed his mother die in the same bed she was born in, compared to that of some "not so pleasant" ones within nursing homes and hospitals, Trevor became adamant that he would pass in his favourite place, his home. Linda, having her own experiences with the loss of loved ones, agreed that dying at home was indeed one of the most comfortable ways to pass on.

The decision to die at home is still not the norm for end of life care in Canada, and unless you have someone to vigorously advocate for you, you will be placed in palliative care inside of a hospital or nursing home. Fortunately for Trevor, Linda's love and respect for him and his wishes, coupled with her past experience, became his advocate. When he no longer was able to express his views, she became his voice and countered the advice towards hospitalization from medical staff.

Upon leaving the hospital, certain in-home care is provided through agencies, like the CCAC, who can assist with such things as nursing care, equipment and personal hygiene. However, for the caregiver themselves, they need more! Linda called Hospice King-Aurora, having been made aware of their existence by a compassionate nurse. Shortly thereafter, Sheila and other volunteers came to Trevor and Linda's home to offer emotional support to them both. Sheila was a perfect match for Trevor. While he enjoyed and appreciated all of the ladies who came to his home, Sheila, who has a background in nursing, shared common interests with him, including a passion for Rugby.

As his battle continued, there were more trips to the hospital but Linda's resolve to respect Trevor's wishes always brought him home again. Once all surgeries, remissions and treatments were exhausted, Trevor remained adamant that his last days be spent at home. Moreover, on numerous occasions he told Linda, and many volunteers, that he was fighting this battle solely for his wife, as he wanted to have as much time as possible with her, and feared leaving her alone.

Being a caregiver is a 24/7 job that not only takes its toll physically and emotionally, as the day-to-day reality of the impending loss of a loved one is devastating to say the least. The grieving process begins immediately, especially when the patient's mental activity becomes affected along with their bodily functions. Throughout their ordeal, Linda truly appreciated the flexibility and personable visits of the Hospice volunteers. They were a wonderful source of support, and assisted her in fulfilling her husband's final wishes. Remarkably, they continue to aid her in coping with her grief and bereavement.