

Ruth Spence

October 21, 1926 - October 16, 2016

Irascible, outspoken, opinionated, but kind hearted and generous, a champion for women and children, a dedicated federal Liberal, and a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother; Ruth Spence died on Sunday morning (October 16, 2016) of kidney failure, five days shy of her 90th birthday.

Born and raised in Campbellford, Ontario, Ruth joined the Army in the dying days of WWII and was demobilized 10 months later. She went on to Kingston and the Kingston General Hospital where she earned her RN and met and married the love of her life, Bob Spence. Married in 1950, she followed Bob to a variety of mining camps in northern Saskatchewan, north-western Ontario, New Brunswick, northern Quebec, and eventually settled in Yellowknife in 1964. It was in Yellowknife that Ruth found her mission in life, becoming the Executive Director of the YWCA, which she used as a platform for a life of community service, working tirelessly to establish programs for women and children in Yellowknife and across the north. Politicians quailed when Ruth called knowing that she would

be forthright in her advocacy, but they always took her call recognizing that she usually had a valid point. Our mother was inclined to call a spade a shovel, but in spite of her sometimes less than diplomatic approach, she was at heart motivated by the desire to build a better world for all.

Pre-deceased by her husband, Bob, and an infant child, Andrew David, Ruth is survived by her children, Pat (Jim Thom), Kit (Suzanne Morphet), John (Rachel), Matt (Barbara Lee), and Duff (Meaghan), 14 grandchildren, and 4 great grand children.

A celebration of life will be held at a time to be announced.

The family is grateful to the staff at Aven Manor who treated our mother with great care and patience and wants to thank all of her friends for taking time to visit Mom while she was at Aven's.

Donations in Ruth's memory can be made to the Yellowknife Community Foundation (www.ykfc.ca).

