



**STRONG,  
Edith Grace  
Nov. 14, 1922 -  
Dec. 29, 2022**

Born 100 years ago, November 14, 1922, on her parents' homestead, NE of Lockwood, Sask. Grace was the 6th child of Robert and Kate (Waldron) Plaster, settlers from London and Birmingham, England. She was welcomed by older siblings Robert (Bert), Ida, Cyril, Ernest (Bun), Victoria and their Granddad Waldron, who lived with the family. Connie

and Ella were born later. Connie (Plaster) Nelson (95 years), of London, Ont. is the only surviving member of that generation of Plasters. Grace died at home in Saskatoon, Sask. December 29, 2022.

Grace was nurtured by a strong sense of community among neighbours; trips by 'shanks mare' and horse and buggy in the early years; harnessing the 'school horse' to go to Kneller School; happy times with the many Waldron cousins; summer student ministers, leading lively Sunday Schools at Kneller; homemade family music; being taught to play cribbage, at an early age, by Granddad Waldron; the delight of her mother's home sewn dresses, just in time for the Christmas Concerts; and especially that her father was able to find 25 cents for each piano lesson Grace had from neighbour girl, Gwen Hurley.

Grace completed Grade 11, by correspondence, under the supervision of a Kneller teacher. Near the end of the Great Depression of the 1930s, after a summer job at Urquhart's General Store, in Lockwood, she and future sister-in-law, Lillian Sadler, went to Regina where they worked at Kresge's Department Store. Grace next found a job as a 'hired' girl for a family in Regina, doing day work.

Grace was a WW2 Veteran. She was a member of the Canadian Women's Army Corps-Signals Division. She became a Lance-Corporal and after Advanced Officer's Training at St Anne de Bellevue, Que., was posted for two and a half years at Canadian Military Head Quarters in London, England, as a wireless radio and teletype operator.

Following demobilization Grace worked in a similar capacity with the RCAF in Winnipeg, then was hired by TransCanada Airlines (now Air Canada) as a wireless and teletype operator, putting her Morse code skills to good use. While at TCA she flew to New York City and also to Bermuda for short vacations.

In June 1950, she married Hugh Strong Jr, a farmer at Drake, Sask. Hughie and Grace worked together on 'Aston Villa Farm', south of Drake on Highway 20, raising Shorthorn cattle, cereal crops and five children until Hughie's passing in 1993. Like the rural women of her generation Grace would garden, preserve fruit, make jam, knit and sew for her family and could as handily butcher chickens as bake a cake!

In the mid-1950s, on a dare from her sister, Ida, Grace applied for a job open to WW2 veterans, 'Postmaster'-Village of Drake. As Grace predicted, a man was hired, but he soon quit, not liking the six day week of indoor employment. Grace was offered the job and for 34 years, 1957-1991, 'Mrs. Strong', was the Drake Post Mistress. Over the years she hired many capable local women to be her assistants so she could have a day off each week to keep up with the unpaid chores at home! The farm being half a mile from Drake, Hughie always had lunch on the table for Grace when the post office

closed between 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Grace was a committed church volunteer. A CGIT leader, for the teenage girls' youth group; organist at the Drake United Church in the 1950s and '60s. If an organist was needed, short term, at Lockwood or Guernsey United Churches she went. Drake UC amalgamated with Knox United Church in Lanigan, in the mid-1960s and she was organist there until 2009 when her eyesight deteriorated.

Happy to offer her time as an accompanist for weddings and funerals, and if no one stepped up, to lead a choir. She once quipped: "I guess my Dad got his money's worth when he found those quarters for piano lessons!"

An active community member, some volunteer roles were: Secretary-Treasurer of the Kansas Rural Telephone Company, a stint on the Drake School Board; Trustee of Carlton Trail Community College from 1973-1978; the Drake Community History Book Committee and the Figure Skating Club.

Happily, three of her siblings and their families, Bert, Ida and Cyril all lived in the vicinity. Grace enjoyed family reunions with the large extended Plaster clan and with Hughie, Grace enjoyed road trips to Manitoba, Alberta and B.C. where their adult children and their grandchildren lived. Close ties, and reunions continued with members of her CWAC Unit. A group of them enjoyed scenic fall colours on a trip to Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. With family she saw Switzerland, the British Isles, Hawaii, Arizona, and Costa Rica. In later years fishing at Missinippi, became an annual treat.

Grace loved the four seasons of Saskatchewan. She was content watching the broad expanse of sunrise and sunsets at the farm. Claiming to have heard 'the music of the spheres' as a child, watching the Northern Lights dance across the vast Prairie sky, she spoke often of the marvels of nature.

In her final four years Grace moved to Saskatoon to live with her daughter Melody. She appreciated visits, calls, emails, cards and letters from friends and neighbours in the communities of Lockwood, Drake and Lanigan. 'Auntie' Grace was especially delighted when extended family members came for a visit and stayed in touch through emails or phone calls. Grace was grateful that her home congregation, Knox United Church, Lanigan, adapted during the pandemic and beyond with Sunday services on Zoom. An early adopter of the computer Grace was fascinated by digital technology.

Predeceased by her parents, six of her Plaster siblings, her husband Hugh, infant daughter April, adult son Marshall Strong, adult grandson Wade Strong, son-in-law Dale Harris. Survived by Melody Harris; Marcia Grobety (Pierre); Malcolm Strong (Gill Newman-Strong); Morley Strong (Ellen Rucks). She was lovingly known to her grandchildren Heidi, Wade, Jehna, Chelsea, Ryan, Dave and Mike and 11 great-grandchildren as 'Gramma Grace'.

Grace's last act of kindness was bequeathing her body for research to the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology-University of Saskatchewan. Her cremains will eventually be returned to her family.

Progressive minded and straightforward in her views Grace was a role model for nieces and nephews as well as her children. Quietly she supported many women who needed a friend to walk beside them for awhile. Always fair-minded, formidable and fun, our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Grace, embodied the words of English children's author Roald Dahl: 'If you have good thoughts, they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely.'

A memorial service for Grace will be held in July 2023.

Notice to the community of the time and location will be posted well in advance.