

BALLET *BV* VICTORIA

Annamaria Bamji (Nee Carnelos) 1946 - 2020



Italian born (Milan) Annamaria had an MA in Art History from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and was a true patron of the Arts, both visual and performing. Her principal passion was Opera, which she listened to almost daily, and regularly attended Pacific Opera Victoria's productions. Amongst other cultural activities, she enjoyed attending the Belfry and Langham Court Theatres, the Victoria Symphony, and Ballet Victoria. With her keen eye for visual arts and having owned and operated a Fine Arts gallery in Kingston Ontario, she was a frequent visitor to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. She also spent her time volunteering at

Craigdoroch Castle, Ross Bay Cemetery, and the Royal BC Museum. She enjoyed entertaining, was an excellent cook, and a voracious reader. As an avid hat and cap collector, she enjoyed wearing different hats for different occasions. This passion certainly became her "trademark". She was a very active Rotarian in Kingston, a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, a major donor, and a benefactor of Rotary International. She was a global philanthropist and supported several educational and cultural organizations, both in Canada and overseas.

In her younger days Annamaria travelled to numerous countries, immersing herself in different cultures. Of all the nations she visited, her favourite place was Gargano (a village on Lake Garda, Italy) where she spent many hours in the archives of the 300 years old Villa Bettoni, researching the villa and its gardens. Her research cumulated in her Masters' Thesis "The Gardens of Amerigo Vincenzo Pierallini at Villa Bettoni."

Since coming to Victoria in 2007 to retire with her husband Dr. Pervez (Perry) Bamji, she was involved in researching and documenting activities of Italians who came to Victoria during the gold rush in mid-1850s. This research resulted in her giving on-site talks at the Ross Bay Cemetery, where most of her chosen Italians are buried. She also wrote a series of short articles on the lives of these Italians in the Fairfield & Gonzales community newspaper – Observer. Prior to her passing, an expanded version of these articles was compiled by Annamaria in a book, entitled Veni, Vidi, Vici. A couple of copies of this book are held by the Greater Victoria Public Library.

