



Obituary:

Cheryl Anne Gaver

LISA CRANDALL AND DONNA MCILVEEN

Reverend Doctor Cheryl Anne Gaver, MDiv and PhD, passed away in Brockville, Ontario, on 21 April 2022, age 68 years, after a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer. She was born in Montreal, Quebec, to Kenneth and Esther (Lasure) Gaver, of Montreal and Oakville, Ontario, respectively. Cheryl was predeceased by her parents and her brother Kenneth Jr. (Jenny) of Georgia. She is survived by her sister, Margaret Wilson (Charles) of Maryland, nieces and nephews John Gaver, Annie Gaver, Jennifer Wilson-White (Shawn) and Charles Wilson (May). She is interred in the family plot in Mutual, Ohio, USA.

In her younger years Cheryl travelled extensively across the United States and Canada with her parents. She credited those experiences as her introduction to multiculturalism. She developed a keen interest in exploring how people from different cultures communicate and negotiate shared spaces, and how religions change as they spread across cultures. Cheryl earned her Bachelor of Arts in French Language and Literature from Vassar College, New York, in 1975. In 1979, she enrolled at Knox College, Toronto, where she earned her Master of Divinity; she was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacraments in 1982 at St. Paul's Church, Bramalea, Ontario. She served a two-year appointment at Norwich and Bookton, both in Ontario.



In the early part of her career, Cheryl demonstrated her care and compassion for others by working as an aid and companion to seniors in her community of Burlington, Ontario. She then moved on to the business world and honed her organizing and administrative talents working for Atomic Energy of Canada, where she was specifically involved with their Y2K Scientific Analysis Computer Program Group.

A life-long learner, Cheryl returned to school regularly over the years and earned a certificate in Office & Information Systems; a certificate in Computer Foundations; a post-graduate diploma in Jewish-Christian Relations; an Master of Arts in Religion/Religious studies; and a doctorate in Religious Studies (Anthropology). Her doctoral thesis title is *Solitudes in Shared Spaces: Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian Anglicans in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in the Post-Residential School Era*.

In addition to her studies, Cheryl maintained her ties with the academic community by participating in research projects and through teaching a variety of courses at several universities and colleges, including University of Ottawa, Wilfred Laurier, and Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advance Learning.

Cheryl returned to the ministry in 2003 as the Part-time Youth Ministry Coordinator at St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church in Oakville. In 2015, she moved to Prescott, Ontario, and in 2016 she was appointed Presbytery Ministry Animator (half-time) for the Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry. In 2019, she began serving as minister (half-time) for the three-point pastoral charge of Finch, Avonmore, and Gravel Hill. During the COVID years she used Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom to stay in touch with her parishioners.

Cheryl had a strong and passionate commitment to healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and throughout her life, she worked with Canadian Indigenous communities. She shared her vast knowledge and understanding with the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry through educational sessions. In 2019, Cheryl participated in the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Healing and Reconciliation Tour, which included visits to several Indigenous ministries in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

Cheryl kept up her academic contacts through her participation in the Interculture Research Centre at the University of Ottawa. This group has evolved into the extra-institutional charity known as the International Network for Training, Education and Research on Culture (Network on Culture).

In addition to her many accomplishments, Cheryl was a pet lover and over the years adopted many dogs, often rescued and in need of a loving and safe home. Her beloved companion Peanut (her last rescue dog) passed on not long after Cheryl.

In her spare time, she gave piano lessons in her home, as well as classes on music theory and music appreciation. Another serious interest for Cheryl was genealogy: she explored her family roots in great detail, which led to the creation of *The Gaver Families: A Jigsaw Puzzle History*.

Over the years Cheryl's published works were as eclectic as her interests:

- *The Gaver families: A Jigsaw Puzzle History*, 2 vols. (Self-published, 1992)
- *Joining the Church: Christian Basics and Who Are We? Joining the Church: Christian Basics and Who Are We?* 2 vols. (Self-published, 2003)
- *Love's Adventure: God's Journal of Creation Love's Adventure: God's Journal of Creation* (Walkabout Press, 2010)
- *Solitudes in Shared Spaces: Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans in the Yukon and Northwest Territories in the Post-Residential School Era*, diss. University of Ottawa, Department of Classics and Religious Studies; accessed 10 March 2025 and available at URL <https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/15d78205-9f91-4d2f-ae22-a480a17f2740/content>
- "Residential Schools in Canada: Why The Message Is Not Getting Across," in *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation*, eds. Brieg Capitaine and Karine Vanthuyne (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 198-219.

We miss you, Cheryl!

About the authors

Lisa Crandall (MA SRS) is an academic on hiatus working as a writer, editor, and researcher.

Donna McIlveen is a Diaconal Minister within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and is the clerk of the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry. She lives near Johnstown, Ontario.