



# Lenora Hammond

## Steadfast Despite Suffering

—by Peter Hammond

In the early hours of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, my wife Lenora fought her final battle with pain and entered eternity. It had been a long and difficult battle with cancer, but she fought it bravely. In July 2010, during Lenora's first bout with cancer, she declared: "I want to live long enough to see my grandchildren." She was regularly quilting for her children and future grandchildren.

### Daughter of Missionaries

Raised in Austria by missionary parents, Lenora went on many missions with her father, Rev. Bill Bathman, energetically ministering behind the Iron Curtain where she had many friends and where she chose to be baptised, where it was actually a matter of life and death.

### Bible-smuggling honeymoon

Shortly after our wedding, Lenora and I headed off to Europe to join her parents in ministry behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe. Lenora was a professional at Bible-smuggling and outwitting Marxist border guards. She was obviously much loved in the churches of Eastern Europe.

### Lenora was always athletic.

Lenora loved skiing. Her parents said that when she was five-years-old, they put skis on her, pushed her out the front door,



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and she skied down the road to Kindergarten in Grossgmain. Although she could not bring her skis to South Africa, she brought her racing bike and completed *The Argus* cycling tour on a number of occasions. She eagerly participated in our mission mountain climbs and hikes.

### A life-saver

In 2009, Lenora donated a kidney to our eldest son, Christopher, who went from renal failure to such a peak of fitness that he earned National colours in Karate and represented South Africa overseas, bringing back bronze medals from international events.

### An enthusiastic paddler

After contracting breast cancer in 2010, Lenora became an enthusiastic Dragon Boat paddler. She recruited each of us in the family to join in Dragon boating in Table Bay Harbour. It became a regular outing for me on Saturday mornings to join Lenora, often as the only male paddler in the back of the boat. I was even included as part of their team in a number of races. Lenora was soon Chairman of The Belles and was part of the team during the World Dragon Boating Festival in Malaysia. She also joined other Cancer Survivor boating teams in Spain, America, Vienna, Austria, and in Venice, Italy. In numerous magazine and newspaper articles and on radio and TV programmes Lenora was a spokesperson for the cancer survivors. Lenora made ministering to people with cancer a major priority and became one of the counsellors for *Reach for Recovery*.

### A Proverbs 31 woman

Lenora became an enthusiastic quilter and presented these labours of love to every family member and some close friends. Like the woman described in Proverbs 31, Lenora was constantly knitting, sewing, quilting, catering, creating, gardening, serving those around her, and improving the world. When

*"I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height or depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*  
— Romans 8:38-39

new people moved into our area, she would give us freshly baked gifts to take to welcome them to the neighbourhood. When people whom she knew were sick, she baked dishes to deliver to their families. Lenora anticipated needs, was thoughtful, and generous.

### A talented home educator

Lenora proved to be a wonderful mother and talented home educator. Our home was turned into a school that seemed to specialise in extra-mural activities. Both my daughters, Andrea and Daniela, enjoyed practising on the piano and completed the Royal Academy of Music exams. Music and guitar lessons, art classes at Frank Joubert Art School, Irish dancing, Girl Guides, Scouts, soccer, tennis, ballet, and of course ice-skating were vital parts of their education. So many people are concerned about socialising and others are concerned about sports. Well, none of these were a problem for our children, Lenora made sure of that. Each of our children are a tribute to their mother's dedication, determination, and creativity in ensuring that our children excelled in their different fields, earning national colours and representing South Africa overseas in Ice Skating, Karate, and Biathlon. All of this is due to the emphasis Lenora gave to physical fitness, sports, and academic excellence.

### A blessing to many

Lenora has been an example of diligence, a high work ethic, unselfish, and sacrificial service to others. She has always been dedicated to her family and has taken her duties very seriously. She has been a blessing to so many thousands of people worldwide. Lenora has always been creative in catering, warm in counselling and hospitality. She invested her time and energy into many people. It was very hard for us to see the sudden deterioration in Lenora's health over the last year. Since her hip replacement a year ago she needed a walker, or crutches, to get around.

### Wanting to die at home

Over her last year Lenora was in constant pain and experienced frequent nausea, but she was adamant that she wanted to die at home amongst her family and not in the hospital amongst



strangers. With frequent scheduled power failures, we became adept at sprinting down the hallway to turn on the generator to keep her oxygen flowing uninterrupted through the night. Friends and family members came up with creative ways of making her life more comfortable and less painful.

### Passing into eternity

As Lenora needed constant 24-hour care, family members took turns to watch her and help her throughout the day and, in my case, at night. Lenora's last weeks were very restless and I would be up constantly throughout the night, seeking to help her, reposition her, administer medicines, or give her water through a syringe, hold her hand, read the Scriptures, and pray with her. Daniela would often have inspiring music playing, such as *Handel's Messiah*, which both she and Lenora had sung in their choirs on numerous occasions. We are sure that all of these provided an

inspiring atmosphere and many great memories in her final days and hours. In the early hours of Tuesday, 9th November, between Level 4 power failures, Lenora passed into eternity. We know that Lenora was not afraid to die. She had often told people: "I know where I am going!" However, it was traumatic for all of us to see her suffer pain and discomfort over so many months. The doctor expressed his amazement that she had lasted so long.

### A dream come true

It was Lenora's greatest desire to live to see her grandchildren and to have her children and grandchildren "no further than 5 minutes away!" Well, that desire was certainly granted. All four of our children and all three grandsons live at the beautiful home and garden that Lenora so lovingly built up and decorated for over three decades. By God's grace, Lenora enjoyed the delightful challenges of three energetic grandsons playing in the beautiful garden that she planted and cultivated through her creativity and diligence over 30 years. Now Lenora is free of pain. There are no wheelchairs or crutches in Heaven. ■

Lenora was constantly serving those around her and improving the world.

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