



Mrs. Frances Loeffel (née Franziska Katharina Lewisch)

December 25, 1939 - May 29, 2026

It is with deep sadness we announce the passing of Frances Loeffel ((née Franziska Katharina Lewisch), beloved Mother, Mother-in-law, Grandmother, Great-Grandmother, Sister-in-law, Aunt and Friend, who quietly left us on May 29, 2026 with family by her side.

Frances entered the world on Christmas Day, 1939, in the small village of Mailberg, Austria, just outside Vienna. Her early years were filled with the simple joys of childhood—playing skipping games with friends, singing in the village chorus, searching for a secret nook to read, and helping harvest grapes in the countryside she loved.

Yet these happy moments unfolded against the backdrop of a nation at war and, later, a country rebuilding from tremendous loss. Among those losses was the passing of her own father, leaving her mother to raise the family on her own.

When Frances was 16 years old, her courageous widowed mother made the life-changing decision to seek a new beginning in Canada for Frances and her brothers. On May 7th, 1956 the Lewisch Family left their home in Austria and travelled to Bremer Haven, Germany where they boarded the “Arosa Sun” and together they embarked on a journey across the Atlantic, arriving in Quebec City before catching a train westward.

That train carried them to Alberta—a place that would become Frances's cherished home for the rest of her days. It was there that she built a life defined by resilience, hard work, deep love for family, and the warm spirit that touched everyone fortunate enough to know her.

As difficult as it was to acclimatize to a new country, new culture, and new language, Frances persevered and made learning a lifelong ambition. After a short stay with family, she was employed quickly in Camrose, then Edmonton. Attending Alberta College was a highlight for her at 19. She impressed the people around her, who were always willing to help her advance. This led to a position at University of Alberta's Rutherford Library, her dream job. Being surrounded by books was her happy place – she was an avid reader as a child, and it continued into her senior years where she shared her latest reads with her family. Growing up, the girls were surrounded by a whole wall of books and a complete set of the Britannica Encyclopedias.

She sought out new experiences constantly, such as hiking up Mt. Edith Cavell, where she remembered being in awe of the universe. At 22, she met John, whose easy-going personality, spirit of adventure and witty humour led to a marriage of 59 years until he passed in 2021. Together they started the family business of farming in Opal, Alberta.

Farming was never an easy life, but Frances had a gift for finding beauty and joy in the everyday. She took great pride in her garden, which rewarded her with a bountiful harvest year after year. She appreciated the beauty of a prairie sunset, valued the strength of a rural community where neighbours always helped neighbours, and cherished the opportunity to raise her two daughters, Darlene and Christina, in a safe and peaceful place.

Frances always had the door open to company, where treats would magically appear. She was famous for her jellyroll, Black Forest cake, apple strudel and

at least 16 varieties of holiday cookies (often opening an empty container because the girls found them!). Growing up, the family enjoyed many traditional Austrian / Germanic dishes, but she loved to experiment in the kitchen so it was always a delight to taste something new, which made her a hit at the Church UCW socials. She was a magnificent sewer, creating striking outfits for her girls, and was exceptionally good at needlepoint, which she learned as a child in Austria. Frances always liked to try new things, from learning French (making it her third language) to checking out the local ceramic classes. Mom gratefully enjoyed her large garden, her beautiful flowers, and creating delicious meals to share with those she loved. These were more than hobbies to her—they were expressions of the care, creativity, and love she poured into her family every day.

Mom had a wonderful sense of style and believed that less was often more. She loved creating a home that felt warm, welcoming, and full of colour. Whether it was rearranging a room, adding a special decorative touch, or planning the next fresh coat of paint, she was always finding ways to make her home beautiful and inviting.

Gatherings of friends and family were frequent, with laughter, food and dancing. Rule of thumb was good food, good music, and plenty of both. Frances and John were poetry in motion on the dance floor and taught the kids at an early age as well. Music was always played in the house, especially on Sundays, and she went to great lengths to ensure her girls had the chance to learn instruments. She exposed them to opera and classical music concerts, something she enjoyed.

Mom and Dad made travel a priority, working and saving to take their daughters to Europe & USA several times. When retirement came, they moved to the town of Bon Accord for a short while and then took on

developing an acreage outside of Calgary near the village of Cayley, where they resided for 22 years. When they were not hooking up their fifth wheel to venture into the USA or driving across Canada, they would hop on a plane to Ireland, Denmark or other European destinations or on a cruise ship with family. Mom and Dad travelled extensively. She tallied up 22 countries in 3 continents. Her most memorable journey was her bucket list trip to the pyramids of Egypt, and the climb up to Mount Siani at the spry age of 70.

Frances spent her final years in Calgary, where she became a social butterfly in her seniors' residence. She embraced life with the same enthusiasm and curiosity that had always defined her, participating in nearly every activity available (loved her Tai chi and Wheel of Fortune), became the seniors' group treasurer, while forming many treasured friendships along the way.

Above all else, Frances remained devoted to her family. Right to the very end, she surrounded those she loved with unwavering love, generosity, and support. She was always there for her girls—encouraging them, teaching them, celebrating their successes, and comforting them through life's challenges.

She loved her son-in-laws, who joked with her often. She embraced the grandkids, never missing an opportunity to ask what was happening for them, and then her great grandkids. Family was the centre of Frances's world. Her love was steady, unconditional, and enduring.

Frances was a citizen of the world – a person who never hesitated to make it a better place. A courageous individual, through and through. She will be dearly missed by her daughter Darlene and husband Daryl, daughter Christina and her husband Rob, grandchildren Erika and Jacob (Lucy), and great-grandchildren Edith and Ernest. She will be fondly remembered by her brothers John (Cora-May) Lewisch and Karl (Glenda) Lewisch, Canadian nephews Ernest, Shawn and Greg Lewisch and their families, Swiss nephews

Peter, Claudio, Michael Waldburger and their families, and extended family and friends in Canada, Austria and Switzerland.

A private Family Graveside service will be held at the Cayley Cemetery.

In memory of Frances, those who wish may make a donation to The Salvation Army <https://donate.salvationarmy.ca>.

Caring for the family is Lyle Reeves Funerals of High River (Craig Snodgrass) 403.652.4242.

Tribute Wall

DG

“ Dear Darlene and Christina and families, Our heartfelt sympathy on the passing of your mom. We have many fond memories of Frances. She was such a hard worker. We think of her immaculate house and large garden. Whenever we visited, we were always warmly welcomed and enjoyed lots of good food, good conversation and much laughter. We will miss her Christmas letters where she always spoke so fondly of her girls and the rest of the family. Now she will live on in our memories.

Dieter and Marleen Gruenberg - June 20 at 12:41 PM

SA

“ Working for Frances was a privilege, but being able to call her a friend was an even greater gift. She had a beautiful heart, a caring nature, and a way of making people feel welcome and appreciated. I will miss our conversations, her laughter, and her friendship. She made a lasting difference in my life, and I will never forget her.

Sanaa - June 10 at 07:16 PM

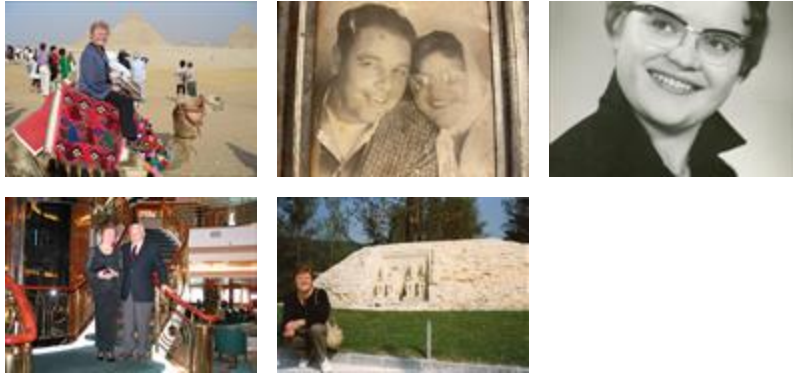
LB

“ I will always remember how warm and welcoming Frances was when I first met her. She was always sharp, curious and interested. She loved her family so much and was always ready with a fond memory of her grandkids. We are so lucky to have introduced her to her great granddaughter Eddie and for her to meet her newest great grandson Ernest virtually. We will miss her.

Lucy Blinfield - June 08 at 07:13 PM

DL

“ 199 files added to the album Mom



Darlene Loeffel - June 07 at 05:16 PM

UA

“ Dear Christina and Darlene, my deepest sympathy for your family. Frances was my very first friend when I arrived to Canada and remained a very special friend who I cherished. Ursula Adler and family.

Ursula Adler - June 02 at 08:18 PM

JM

“ Dear Christina & Darlene & Family, our deepest sympathies on the passing of your dear mother. Frances was a dear & special friend to many of us! She was a valued Cayley UCW member. No matter the task whether baking for a Church Bake sale or coming out for our light hearted Church cleanings, her laughter and smiles made the day brighter! Cherish your many memories knowing Frances is at peace.

Prayers & hugs, Joan & Les Marles



Joan Marles - June 02 at 05:19 PM