



Colleen Anne Bilawchuk

February 28, 2024

Colleen Anne Bilawchuk was born on April 15, 1963, in Spirit River, Alberta, to Edward and Lucy Bilawchuk. Colleen was the eldest of three children. Colleen was always a good student and upon graduation moved to Calgary to get her first university degree.

She started her university education studying psychology but instead of continuing down this path she pivoted to get her law degree. However, neither direction felt right for her. She worked for a few years and then decided it was time to see the world.

Spurred on by having a love to travel, in 1997, Colleen accepted a job to teach English as a second language (ESL) in South Korea. She finally found her calling and enjoyed working with university students and adults to develop their English skills.

Colleen stayed in South Korea for 5 years and took many opportunities to travel throughout Asia. She explored South Korea, went to see the Great Wall of China, and found her ideal vacation spot in Guam. Her mother, Lucy and sister, Arlene, had the good fortune to visit her in South Korea in 1999 and travelled with Colleen to visit Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, and San Francisco. Over the years, Colleen continued to travel and explored Canada, the United States, and found her second favourite vacation spot in

Hawaii.

Colleen moved back to Canada in 2002 and came to live in Toronto. She updated her education for a few years and then found jobs teaching ESL to adults. She eventually found a position at ILSC Toronto as a teacher which she stayed at for many years. Around 2014, she added another job to her resume by becoming a Speaking and Writing IELTS examiner (assessing candidates' English proficiency). Colleen prided herself on her professionalism and strove to do her best at everything she took on. Many of her students remember her for her ability to help them develop their grammar skills. She would continue to teach and conduct IELTS exams up until her death.

Colleen had a passion for literature. She not only collected rare books but read thousands of them. She was an ardent reader and she sought out a book lovers' community that held annual conferences with authors in attendance. Colleen looked forward to travelling to these conference locations, meeting like-minded attendees, and collecting more books. She also enjoyed live theatre performances and was able to attend a number of events over the past few years.

Colleen loved her family and friends. She was an incredibly generous spirit, strong willed, intelligent, independent, and had a great sense of humour. Colleen had grown confident in who she was, what she wanted and lived life her way. It is with great sadness that her journey on this earth was cut too short.

Those of us who knew her will greatly miss her presence, humour, kindness, caring, support, and willingness to share her opinions. Colleen was always someone you had on your side and was there whenever you needed her. She was loved by many and will be greatly missed.

Colleen was predeceased by her father, Edward Bilawchuk (2008), and is survived by her mother Lucy Bilawchuk, sister Arlene Bilawchuk, brother Brian Bilawchuk, niece Carys Bilawchuk, and nephew Kane Bilawchuk. Colleen leaves behind Aunts, a lot of cousins, and many friends who hold her dear to their hearts.

Colleen passed away suddenly on February 28, 2024, and wished for a simple cremation. The family wishes to thank everyone for their kindness, love and support they have received. A Celebration of Life for Colleen will be announced later.

In lieu of flowers, please feel free to make donations to the Arthritis Society, National Kidney Foundation, Diabetes Canada, or to your local food bank.

Tribute Wall

DT

“ My deepest condolences to Colleen’s family and friends. I was very saddened to hear of Colleen’s sudden passing. I worked with Colleen at ILSC for many years, and I admired her dedication to her work and students. I had the pleasure of seeing Colleen at our Speaking Examiner recertification in November, and I’m grateful that I have that recent memory of her. She was great company. We exchanged funny stories about teaching and examining, and it was nice to see her in good spirits, despite her health struggles. I will miss her. May her memory be a blessing to all that knew and loved her. Rest In Peace now, Colleen.



Dulce Torres - March 27, 2024 at 12:29 PM

AV

“ Colleen was a consummate professional; she took the vocation of teaching very seriously. I will remember our talks about teaching and how much she always put into her vocation. My warmest and most heartfelt condolences to Colleen’s family. She was loved by everyone who knew her.

Albert Vila - March 18, 2024 at 02:06 PM

AV

“ I worked with Colleen for over 12 years. She was always very calm and nice. She was also a dedicated and hardworking teacher, who cared a lot about the well being of her students. I miss her. My sincere condolences to her family and loved ones.



Afshin Vatandoost - March 18, 2024 at 09:22 AM


Emiliano
Mazzetto

“ Colleen was one of my first English teachers at ILSC. I will never forget her engaging lessons, clever quizzes, and her classroom that was filled with an abundance of plants. She had so many plants! Colleen, I want to express my gratitude for being a part of my life in Canada. Wherever you may be, rest in peace.



Emiliano Mazzetto - March 17, 2024 at 07:36 PM

KF

“ I worked with Colleen for about a decade at ILSC while I was the manager of Elizabeth St. campus and the IELTS department.

Colleens classroom was right across from my office at ILSC. I often heard her when she had her open at break times. Her laugh was unmistakable and she often laughed with her students.

When we became an IELTS Exam centre, she was trained as a Clerical Marker for the reading and listening. She had the greatest accuracy of all of our CMs. She seemed to thrive on detailed work. She then became an examiner and admitted how tedious she found the CM, yet she did it so well. She took that same attention to detail to the examining role.

My condolences to her family and friends. She was taken too young and too suddenly. She will be missed by many.

Katrin

Katrin Faridani - March 17, 2024 at 09:53 AM

CL

“ To the Bilawchuk Family,

I worked with Colleen at ILSC for over 17 years, and I have the deepest respect for her professionalism, dedication, and work ethic. Over the years, I have enjoyed the work friendship we had sharing stories about our teaching experiences, mutual students, and the joys and difficulties of home ownership. I will also never forget how kind Colleen was when she sent me a message when my mother passed away.

I will miss Colleen, and she will always be remembered as a great teacher, colleague, and friend.

Please accept my deepest condolences on her passing. May she rest in peace.

-Colleen Lee

Colleen Lee - March 16, 2024 at 07:58 PM



“ *I worked with Colleen for over 15 years at ILSC Toronto, first as a fellow teacher, then as a manager. I always enjoyed chatting with Colleen in the hallways and staff room and at the occasional staff party. Colleen was always professional in her manner and approach to work. Very calm, friendly and a warm presence to be around. I know her students enjoyed her and that she enjoyed them. I have fond memories of working with Colleen for all those years--ILSC will not be the same without her. Deepest condolences to Colleen's family and friends. She will be sorely missed—Graham Arnold.*

Graham Arnold - March 15, 2024 at 03:46 PM

OK

“ *Oksana lit a candle in memory of Colleen Bilawchuk*



Oksana - March 15, 2024 at 03:17 PM