



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Heritage Markham Committee

**FROM:** Regan Hutcheson, Manager-Heritage Planning

**DATE:** December 11, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Death of Former Heritage Markham Member  
Gwyn Wojna

---

Former member of Heritage Markham Gwyn Wojna has passed away.  
See attachment

### **Background**

- Gwyn Wojna was one of the founding members of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill
- She was also a member of the first Heritage Markham Committee in 1975 and 1976 representing Thornhill.
- In 2004, upon Heritage Markham's recommendation and Markham Council's endorsement, she was the Markham recipient for the Ontario Heritage Foundation's Heritage Community Recognition Award for Cultural Heritage

### **Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham**

THAT the Heritage Markham Committee extends its condolences to the family of Gwyn Wojna recognizing her past accomplishments in assisting in the protection and preservation of Markham's cultural heritage resources, especially her work in historic Thornhill.

#### **File:**

Q:\Development\Heritage\HERITAGE MARKHAM FILES\MEMBERS\Death\HM Dec 2019 Gwyn Wojna.doc

In memory of

# Gwyneth Afron Wojna

March 19, 1923 - November 24, 2019



On the morning of Sunday, November 24, 2019, Gwyneth died peacefully at the Meighen Manor Health Centre in Toronto under the professional and kind care of both medical and chaplaincy staff. Predeceased by her husband of 41 years, Jan, her eldest son, John Andrew and her first grandchild, Timothy Andrew, she is survived by her sister, Lyn Jones, her two remaining children, Elizabeth Mary and Simon Henry, her nephew, Robert, her niece, Louise and her seven grandchildren, Daniel, Emily, James, Evan, Sarah, Matthew and Owen.

Born in 1923 in Wrexham, Wales to Elizabeth Edwards and Henry Jones, Gwyneth worked as a nursing assistant during the war where she met Jan Wojna, a Polish soldier stationed in London. They married and moved to Canada with their young son, John Andrew, finally settling in Thornhill, Ontario where Gwyneth lived happily in the same historical home for 60 years.

Gwyneth lived a full and rich life - she was passionate about gardening, art, music, history, reading and travel. She dabbled in theatre, was active on committees, and was a force in her Thornhill neighbourhood. Gwyneth's garden was often open to tours and she spent many, many summers creating a floral refuge in her backyard. One of Thornhill's founding members for both the Historical and Horticultural societies, her enthusiasm, dedication and voice were respected and valued.

Gwyneth's artistic talent took her throughout the United States to study Early American Art and she became a member of its Guild. Her beautiful work included painting on glass, stencilling on tin and furniture, and punched lampshade designs.

Gwyneth spent many years as both a tour guide at Black Creek Pioneer Village and as a volunteer at the Gardiner Museum. Both positions spoke to her love of history and art and in keeping traditions alive through teaching young children about Canada's pioneering heritage.

In her 60s and 70s, Gwyneth was able to travel to destinations such as San Francisco, Paris, and Greece. She loved exploring and enjoyed viewing the artwork unique to each destination.

But most importantly, Gwyneth was a woman of deep faith and found comfort and solace in her church, religious retreats, and spiritual readings. She had many losses in her life as all of her “firsts” were taken from her: Her husband, her first child (David who was stillborn), her firstborn son, John Andrew and her first grandchild, Timothy. Despite all this, Gwyneth courageously soldiered on and made a life for herself and her family, trusting that her departed loved ones were truly in God’s hands.

Gwyneth Wojna was a loving daughter, sister, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and friend and all who knew her recall her sense of humour, her sense of purpose and her keen interest in increasing her own understanding of what it means to be a citizen of the world.