

‘She kept our walking boots in the fridge’

Doreen loved travel, hated spiders and always mucked in. Her gift to Macmillan will go on helping others

Doreen Gillanders made her mark from the moment she was born. Arriving 20 minutes after her twin brother Steven, Doreen weighed just 2lb and spent the first three months of her life in hospital.

“It was a long-standing family joke that Mum struggled so much with Steven, she didn’t want to go back to collect Doreen,” says the twins’ younger brother, Bryan Innes, 55.

The three siblings were raised on a farm in Stonehaven, near Aberdeen. Alongside harvesting potatoes and mucking out the stables, Doreen enjoyed horse riding, socialising with the Kinneff Young Farmers group, and listening to Enrique Iglesias.

“She absolutely loved Enrique and went to a number of his concerts,” says Bryan. “Westlife was another favourite. She was very much into music.”

Doreen enjoyed a career as a project administrator at BP. And there she made some life-long friends with whom she could share her passions, including Formula 1, road trips in her beloved VW Golf, and baking.

“She would always volunteer to make the dessert at any social gathering,” says Bryan. “She also had a wickedly dry sense of humour. Although she wouldn’t be the first to speak, whenever she did she was very funny.”

Doreen enjoyed travelling, her

“**She left a legacy that will make a big difference**

adventures taking her to Africa, New Zealand and even Australia, despite her arachnophobia.

“Australia tested her fear of spiders to the absolute limits,” says Doreen’s friend and fellow traveller, Gillian Begg. “No matter how meticulously I checked our rooms, she would always find one. She eventually decided to keep our walking boots in the fridge, as it was the only way to stop the spiders getting in them.”

“Whenever Doreen phoned me I knew there was a spider



Doreen in Venice; with twin Steven, right, and younger brother Bryan

in her house,” Bryan adds. “She’d make them sound like a tarantula, but when I got there they’d be the size of a fingernail.”

Then, in 2019, at the age of 51, Doreen found she’d developed inoperable brain cancer. In 2022, she moved into Rubislaw Park care home in Aberdeen, where she spent the rest of her life.

“Even in her darkest days, she never lost her sense of humour,” says Bryan. “One of us visited her every day. When the end of her life approached, we were all able to say our goodbyes.”

As well as asking for Enrique Iglesias to be played at her funeral, Doreen’s will included a gift of £25,000 to Macmillan.



“Macmillan was very close to her heart,” says Bryan. “The Macmillan nurses supported her through her illness and were always there to listen. Although her passing was tragic, she left a legacy that will make a big difference to a lot of people.”

Doreen Gillanders was born on December 21, 1967. She died of cancer on September 3, 2023, aged 55. Macmillan is grateful for her donation and thanks those like her who choose to leave a gift in their will. Doreen’s legacy to Macmillan will help others living with cancer receive essential support at their time of greatest need.

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