



# IN THE HILLS™

Meet a Community Elder: Wendy Kulhay

Whether riding her ATV or wintering in Costa Rica, at age 91 Wendy remains a spirited dynamo.

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Her kids call her *Triple A*, “ancient artistic adventurer.” At 91 years old, she prefers simply “ancient.” Okay, but I’d go more with “spirited exuberant dynamo.”

When I arrived for a visit, Wendy Kulhay parked the ATV that allows her to revel in the beauty of the rolling 50-acre Caledon property she shares with her son, Jan Frank, and his family, and then graciously showed me through her comfortable bungalow. I was introduced to the rest of her family through photographs covering every wall, each surface, and of course, the entire fridge door.

Growing up in Kirkland Lake as the eldest of three children born to Polish mountain immigrants, Wendy watched her parents adjust to the Canadian way of life. “Dad dynamited rock in the gold mines, while Mum augmented the coffers by picking blueberries,” she says.

Wendy met and married Frank Kulhay in 1951 when they were both working on Canada’s ill-fated Avro Arrow project in Malton. Three children followed, Katrina, Janina and Jan Frank. During this time, both Wendy and Frank completed B.Ed. degrees, primarily through night school and summer courses, a seven-year process for each of them.



Wendy Kulhay, 91, and the ATV she uses to tour her 50-acre property.

Wendy's teaching career included placements at Scarlett Heights Collegiate Institute and Port Credit and Erindale secondary schools before she settled in for 25 years at Mayfield Secondary School in Caledon. She was a counsellor and taught business subjects, including switchboard, shorthand, penmanship and law.

"I loved my job, and applied to stay three years past the usual 65-year retirement age," she says. During her time at Mayfield, Wendy also taught teachers how to teach through the University of Toronto's Faculty of Education.

And post-career? "Over the years I've delighted in giving Katrina administrative help with her Erin integrated medical clinic," says Wendy.

Her beloved Frank died in 2009, but "I'm grateful that two of my three grandchildren were born before that time."

Wendy and Frank began wintering in Playas del Coco, Costa Rica, about 20 years ago, and Wendy has kept up the tradition, hosting winter getaways for her children and grandchildren. It's also the place, she says, "where I become inspired to unpack my painting supplies." Wendy took up painting when she was 75, and her acrylic portraits of family and landscapes of the natural world she loves are now displayed throughout her home.

"There's more to life than simply seeking more," she says.

About the Author [More by Gail Grant](#)

Gail Grant is a freelance writer who lives in Palgrave.