

BARBARA JUNE (FRANSEN) LARSON

June 1, 1958 ~ February 28, 2023 (age 64)

Barbara June Larson, of Wheatland, Wyoming, passed away on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at Granite Rehabilitation and Wellness in Cheyenne, Wyoming at the age of 64. Memorial services will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. at Covenant Lutheran Church with burial to follow at Wheatland Cemetery.

Visitation with the family will be held on Friday, April 21, 2023 at the Gorman Funeral Home from 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

Barb was born in Watertown, South Dakota on Sunday, June 1, 1958 to Julia (Eske) Fransen and Harold Fransen. She attended school in Groton, South Dakota, including Groton High School. She then attended college at South Dakota State University, and she met her husband of 36 years, Brian Derrick Larson. Brian and Barb were married on June 24, 1983 in Dorset, Minnesota.

After Brian graduated from South Dakota State University, Barb and Brian moved to Wheatland, and Brian began working for Basin Electric Power Cooperative at the Laramie River Station (coal-fired power plant) in Wheatland, Wyoming. Brian and Barb purchased land north of Wheatland, built a home on that property, and lived there for 39 years. Shortly thereafter, Barb began her work of many years, being a mother to her three boys: Sean, Craig, and Erik.

Barb enjoyed cheering for her boys in their years playing baseball, football, and other sports. She loved a good book, a Salem Light or American Spirit cigarette on the back deck, drinking coffee all day, and Kenny G's Christmas Album. Barb was an accomplished trumpeter and was chosen to march with the McDonald's All-American Marching Band in the 1975 Rose Bowl Parade as a senior in high school. Baking and cooking with her boys brought her joy. She loved her family and took care of her mother, Julia, for a number of years.

With three boys who were interested in sports from birth, Barb grew to love sports and cheer for the many teams Brian and the boys rooted for. She was a dedicated Minnesota Vikings, Denver Broncos, Colorado Rockies, Wyoming Cowboys, and Colorado Avalanche fan. However, Barb grew a little sick of rooting for the same group of teams, so she adopted an Oregon Ducks fandom that was very strong.

Barb struggled with a number of ailments during the last 25 years of her life. She was a recovering alcoholic yet showed amazing grace in the face of an ugly disease. She conquered her addiction and finished her college degree later in life at the University of Wyoming, becoming an addictions counselor and serving individuals who struggled with the same issues she faced. In 2011, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer. She beat cancer.

She beat cancer because of her incredible endurance, an amazing positive attitude of encouragement, and grit. She Dreamt. Big. She formed a Wyoming soap company, which never got off the ground. Some of her and Brian's best moments together were her creating the soap idea and Brian using his engineering expertise to get the composition right. When her family hiked the Grand Canyon together with Julia and her sister, Linda, Barb always wanted to go the extra mile down the trail, while her sons thought they should turn around a mile ago.

She ran the Bolder Boulder for her first time on May 29, 2000. Then she recruited her family to join her in the run. Her or members of her family have run the race at least 15 years since she started the tradition. She quit smoking multiple times with the race as motivation, but in a few other years she may or may not have allegedly stopped for three to four smoke breaks and a Starbucks coffee during the 10K. Witnesses contend that she was actually a bit faster in a couple of those years. Family members will continue to run the Bolder Boulder yearly in her honor.

Barb was known for her incredible endurance, steadfast encouragement, love of family and friends, creative ideas, sense of humor, big dreams, and a deep desire to venture off the beaten path.

Barb is survived by her three sons, Sean Larson (Shaina Case), Craig Larson (Becca Larson), and Erik Larson (Emily Larson). She was the proud grandmother to six amazing grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister, Linda Bahr and brothers, Larry Fransen (Lynette Fransen) and Greg Fransen (Erin Fransen). She is also survived by many special extended family and friends. She was preceded in death by her mother, Julia; her father, Harold; and her husband, Brian.

The family encourages donations in Barb's memory be made to the Harmony Foundation (addictions rehabilitation organization in Estes Park, Colorado) or to plant a tree in a National Forest through A Living Tribute (website addresses below).

If you take a page of obituaries, please leave a note in the donation box so it can be replaced.