



Barbara W. Johnson

January 6, 2026

Barbara W. Johnson, passed away at the age of 71 after battling ALS for 3 years. Barbara always pursued her deep passions and interests in art, science, nature, and travel.

Raised in the foothills of Colorado Springs, Barbara spent her childhood riding her horse Joe around the Garden of the Gods, skiing with her parents and two older brothers, and spending time with friends. After high school, Barbara moved to Mexico City to pursue Flamenco dance and attended the Ballet Folklórico de México. She returned to the US and earned her Bachelor's in English and Biology from New Mexico State University. Barbara then served in the Peace Corps Paraguay for more than two years. After her service, she moved to New York City, working as a science editor for textbooks and journals, where she met her husband, Joel. After living in Amsterdam, she stayed home to take care of her daughter while living on the East Coast. Always drawn back to her home state, Barbara and her family moved to Fort Collins and she earned her PhD in Microbiology at Colorado State University. She joined the Centers for Disease Control where her expertise included diagnosing mosquito-borne viruses including yellow fever, chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, Zika, West Nile and dengue. Throughout her career, she was able to travel around the world, collaborating with scientists, health systems, and organizations to better diagnose and prevent diseases worldwide. Outside of work, Barbara and her family fostered and adopted

dogs and cats, having up to 4 dogs and 2 cats at once. Always interested in different mediums of art, in her retirement Barbara dove into painting silk scarves, learning botanical illustration, and pursuing printmaking.

She was a passionate advocate for science research and public health to improve diagnosis, prevention and treatment of horrible diseases that affect people in the US and around the world. Her advocacy continued after her ALS diagnosis. She was a participant in a clinical trial, spent nights reading scientific papers, and advocated against funding cuts to ALS research.

Barbara is survived by her husband, Joel Claypool, her daughter Anneke Claypool, her sister Laura O'Brien Miller, sisters-in-law Shirley, Deb, Carol, and Ginny, brother-in-law Kim, and many nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her mother Margaret, father Milton, brothers Todd and Laird, and birth parents Virginia and Len.

In lieu of flowers, Barbara requested donations go to your local animal rescue.