



Kathy T. Nielsen

October 21, 2022

Kathy Tuma Nielsen, loving wife, mother of two, grandmother of two, died on October 21 in Fort Collins after a long battle with breast cancer.

Though she spent her adult life in California and Colorado, Kathy was a Wyoming girl at heart. She loved the wide-open spaces, natural beauty, wildlife, and “only in Wyoming” people that were found in her home state. And Kathy loved sharing the beauty of Wyoming life with her children and her friends. Her favorite childhood memories included family camping trips around the state – the Bighorns, on the ice at Boysen Reservoir, Yellowstone, and the Tetons.

In all of Wyoming the place Kathy loved the most was Alcova Lake. Her parents were early members of the Casper Water Ski Club and Kathy spent part of every summer at the ski club for nearly sixty years. Her lifelong love of waterskiing was born at the ski club, where she skied on exhibition teams and in tournaments. Kathy relished her memories of “life at the club”: the sense of community and teamwork as the club grew, “Sage Valley” parties, and the extended family – the Becks, the Isermans, the Phillips, and others - with whom she spent her summers.

Kathy was an athlete before sports programs for young girls existed, so she tagged along when her father coached her brothers’ baseball teams. Cliff

allowed Kathy to participate as much as possible without embarrassing the boys who couldn't keep up with her. Kathy's love of athletics continued through high school, where she played on the Kelly Walsh girls' volleyball and basketball teams, and in college, where a coach observed her ability and recruited Kathy to play on the first women's soccer team at the University of Wyoming.

Kathy earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology from UW. While pursuing her MBA she met the love of her life, David Nielsen, on November 13, 1981 in a bar in Casper. In less than 24 hours they both knew they'd found "the one". David was a musician and traveling with a band, so they got to know each other through letters and long-distance phone calls. They married in Casper on July 20, 1985, and settled in Sunnyvale, California.

While in Sunnyvale Kathy found a career as an executive recruiter, working for several different firms. Her attention to detail, kindness, and determination to help people find their next job produced long-lasting, fruitful relationships with her clients. Both of their children were born during this time, Micah in April 1989, and Rebecca in September 1992. Lifelong friendships were born in Sunnyvale too, as the Nielsen family invested their time, talent, and energy at the Good Samaritan Church and the Walk to Emmaus communities in Fresno and Antioch, CA.

Their desire to raise their children closer to family, and job opportunities for David, allowed the family to relocate to Fort Collins in the fall of 1999. Kathy continued her recruiting work and started volunteering in Micah and Rebecca's classrooms. One of the classroom teachers Kathy worked with recognized her natural ability and encouraged her to think about becoming a teacher. With that encouragement behind her, Kathy enrolled at Colorado Christian University. She earned a degree in elementary education in the spring of 2008 and began her most meaningful career as an elementary

school teacher in the Poudre School District.

Many lasting friendships were formed with her PSD colleagues. Their caring and determination to bring out the best in their students, and shared experiences “in the trenches”, brought new meaning and purpose to Kathy’s life.

As their children grew up and moved on to college, life as empty nesters started to come into focus. A routine doctor’s appointment in February of 2012 changed the direction of Kathy’s life from “what’s on the bucket list” to battling breast cancer.

As physically and emotionally difficult as Kathy’s treatment was, cancer could not take away the beauty and joy of life. Her spirit and sparkle remained steadfast. After Kathy received her breast cancer diagnosis:

- Both Micah and Rebecca graduated from college and began their careers. Micah earned his master’s degree, and Rebecca has nearly completed hers.
- Micah married his high-school sweetheart, and they now have two children – Kathy’s beloved granddaughters.
- Kathy spent numerous days enjoying Alcova Lake with family and friends.
- There were trips to France, Italy, England, Israel, New York City, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Palm Springs.
- She enjoyed abundant time doing “Nana things” with her granddaughters – playing, decorating cookies, in the water at Alcova Lake.

Kathy lived a rich life with more diverse experiences than can be included here. She was devoted to her family and friends. Kathy will long be cherished and sorely missed.

A celebration of Kathy’s life will be held on Monday November 21 at 12PM at

Faith Church, 3920 South Shields Street, Fort Collins.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation in Kathy's name to the P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund.

Learn more about the Educational Loan Fund here:

<https://www.peointernational.org/about-peo-educational-loan-fund-elf> Donate

to the Educational Loan Fund here:

<https://donations.peointernational.org/peo-donation-elf>

Tribute Wall

DR

“ I cant believe it's been a year since we lost you. Love you very much.

Darlene Robinson

Darlene Robinson - October 19, 2023 at 12:18 PM

HK

“ heather kiuttu lit a candle in memory of Kathy Nielsen



heather kiuttu - November 19, 2022 at 11:39 AM

NH

“ 1 file added to the album Amazing Teacher



Nichol Huckins - October 31, 2022 at 02:59 PM

DR

“ Darlene robinson lit a candle in memory of Kathy Nielsen



Darlene robinson - October 28, 2022 at 09:21 AM