



Janis Marie Hess

June 13, 1952 - June 3, 2026

Janis Marie Hess, 73, of Estes Park, Colorado, passed away in San Tan Valley, Arizona on June 3, 2026 following an aggressive cancer diagnosis. Janis was remarkable, manifesting happiness in herself and others.

Janis was born on Friday, June 13, 1952 in Hampton, Iowa to Kenneth and Audrey Herwig. She graduated valedictorian from Hampton Community High School in 1970. She received a Bachelor of Science in Education from Drake University in 1974, with a math major and a business minor.

In the summer of 1972, she met Roger Hess while they were working at National Park Village North in Estes Park, Colorado. They were married on June 15, 1975 at the First Congregational Church in Hampton, Iowa, returning to Estes Park for their love of the mountains. She found the most joy in life when hiking the trails of Rocky Mountain National Park while wearing her recognizable orange backpack and pedometer. She said the proudest moment of her life was when her young children chose going into Rocky Mountain National Park over going to the carnival.

She had an extraordinary 35-year career as a beloved math teacher and private tutor. She taught at Estes Park Middle School and Front Range Community College in Fort Collins, Colorado. She received a Teacher of the Year award in 2001. Her students recognized her outside of the classroom,

and she knew every one of them by name.

She retired in 2009 and became a "snowbird" to San Tan Valley, Arizona, where she enjoyed swimming. With a love of music, she played the flute throughout her life. Her faith in Jesus Christ led her to membership in the Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies in 1983. She participated in a philanthropic organization called P.E.O. as a sister in Chapter HF of Estes Park. Her favorite sports teams were the Denver Broncos and the Colorado Avalanche.

Janis was known for her homemade food, including pumpkin bread, Christmas sugar cookie wreaths, chocolate sheet cake, macaroni salad, her grandmother's Swedish meatball recipe, German chocolate pound cake, and personally decorated birthday cakes for her children and grandchildren.

Janis is preceded in death by her parents, Kenneth and Audrey Herwig, and her brother, Keith Herwig. She is survived by her stepmother, Rozann Herwig of Hampton, Iowa; her husband, Roger Hess of Estes Park, Colorado; her daughter, Jena (Blair) Schmittel, and grandchildren Ellia, Jaxen, Aiden, and Ryker of Gilbert, Arizona; and her son, Justin Hess of Estes Park, Colorado.

A private service will be held with interment in the Hampton Cemetery. Memorial donations may be mailed to: Teri Salerno, Treasurer, P.E.O. Chapter HF, 1032 Fairway Lane, Estes Park, CO 80517-7156. Woodley Funeral Home of Hampton is caring for Janis and her family.

Cemetery Details

Hampton Cemetery

Hampton, IA

Tribute Wall

CM

“ *My husband and I both graduated with Janis in Hampton. Although I don't think we have seen Janis since then, her friendly smile obviously remained with her throughout her life. Janis was always such a sincere, kind classmate. In reading her obituary it sounds like she lived a wonderful life, which she certainly deserved. You have our sincerest sympathy.*

Connie (Plagge) and Mike Murphy - June 19 at 12:31 AM

KM

“ *1 file added to the album From a Friend*



Katie Myers - June 16 at 10:49 AM

HT

“ *1 file added to the album From a Friend*



Heidi Thomas - June 13 at 04:52 PM

EE

“ *Rozann and family, our deepest condolences in the passing of Janis, our prayers are with you. Ed & Betty Etnier*

Ed & Betty Etnier - June 10 at 05:31 PM

MJ

“ *Marianne, Jim, Ken and Judy purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Janis Marie Hess.*



Marianne, Jim, Ken and Judy - June 09 at 12:31 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Janis Marie Hess.*



June 08 at 02:25 PM