



Janice Smith

January 29, 1937 - May 7, 2024

Janice Shirley Smith, nv wo ti a ge yv, 87, of Aurora, Colorado, passed away on May 7, 2024, surrounded by loved ones.

She was born in Purdy, Arkansas on January 29, 1937, to Burl and Cova Smith. Janice attended North Side High School and graduated nursing at Sparks Hospital School of Nursing in Fort Smith, AR. She received her B.S. and M.S. in nursing at the University of Colorado. Janice worked as a Registered Nurse (RN) for several years in Arkansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Colorado. She began a teaching career in nursing in 1964, teaching in a 3-year diploma program and then an Associate Degree program.

Jan was very passionate about helping others and dedicated her career to nursing and teaching nursing students. Jan was the author of two chapters in a critical care nursing book. Her Masters' thesis was on caring for unresponsive patients. She did research demonstrating that a patient who is "unconscious" should really be considered "unresponsive," due to the fact they may be receiving all sensory stimuli but unable to respond by motor function. At Front Range Community College, she lectured to many different groups in several states regarding caring for unresponsive patients and for critical care patients. She was a member of Sigma Theta Tau, the national nursing honorary society. Jan made significant contributions to society by teaching thousands of nursing students

When the nursing program moved to a new campus, they had this skeleton that needed to be transferred and it was going to cost a lot of money. Jan was caught on camera transporting the skeleton, complete with a scarf on it's head, in the passenger seat of her '66 Mustang convertible, in order to save the school some money. It made the news locally and overseas, including the Paul Harvey show! She even had a classmate from her nursing school that saw it and contacted her about it.

Jan retired from teaching in 1998. She continued her travels throughout retirement with friends and family, many of which were completed in a Four Winds RV motorhome. She loved to drive it. They visited Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain Forest, Arkansas, Florida, Glacier National Park, and many other National parks. Jan traveled to Peoria, AZ with her dear friend, Rachel Elrod, on several occasions and she cherished her Arizona family deeply.

Jan was very proud of her Cherokee heritage and proud to be an Elder in her tribe, the Northern Cherokee Nation. She received the name, *nv wo ti a ge yv*, meaning Medicine Women, conferred on her by Chief Grey Owl.

Jan loved all animals, especially Bichon dogs. Jan always said, "There are no bad dogs – only bad dog owners." She fiercely defended all animal actions. Jan donated to many animal rescue organizations. She owned several dogs including Thanda, Lacy, Bouffant, Monique, and Ivy. Ivy was her last dog and she watched over her as Jan was having more physical difficulties. We know she has met her beloved dogs at the Rainbow Bridge, probably with a pocket full of treats.

Jan loved to travel and explore. Her most favorite trip was her months spent in South Africa in Swaziland. She sponsored children through World Vision in

Africa and Haiti. She loved to travel to Hawaii and explore many of the islands, often enjoying delicious Maui Gold pineapple.

Jan loved people and never met a stranger. She was one of the most caring and generous individuals anyone has ever met. Everybody loved her free spirit and adventurous attitude. Anytime Jan had new neighbors, barely before they moved in, she wanted Rachel to go and welcome them to the neighborhood and give them their names and phone numbers. She made sure all neighbors felt welcome. She enjoyed sitting on the front porch when she was no longer able to walk around the block and would hope for as many people as possible to come by with their dogs. And if they came and she wasn't out there, she would say, "Oh! I should've been out there."

She had a strong faith and loved her church. She was a member of the First Church of the Nazarene in Denver, CO.

She was very proud to have a heart-sister, Rachel Elrod, of 60+ years who stood beside her thick and thin. Rachel was by her side to the very end and Jan deeply cherished their relationship and they were practically inseparable throughout their lives. From traveling to nursing conferences, to going to medical appointments, they were together through it all. She loved her family and the friends she had around the world.

Jan loved it when her nephew, Sean and his wife, Angie, came out to Colorado to visit and was always disappointed if they didn't bring their dog, Tucker along for the trip. The four of them enjoyed their many adventures to places such as Breckenridge, CO, and Hawaii.

Jan was very proud of her niece, Wanda Spicer, and glad she became a nurse.

A beautiful memory of Jan was shared by Tracey Turecek, a dear friend of Jan's: "Jan had a tradition of baking Christmas candy every year for a lot of years. I was blessed to be able to share in this tradition for the past three years. She was so meticulous in every detail of making the candy, it was no wonder, it was loved by everyone she gifted it to. This past year we made quite a few batches of fudge. On the very last batch we were making I told Jan I could finish it up. She agreed and went to the living room to relax. When the timer went off, I went into the kitchen to finish up. About 10 minutes later Jan returned to the kitchen as well to admire our hard work. I felt extremely proud when she smiled and told me it looked wonderful. I will cherish these memories, knowing Jan will be looking down on me the next time I make her Christmas candy, with a smile, telling me it looks wonderful."

Jan was not fond of technology. When she retired she said she left the computer at work. She said smartphones were really "dumb phones," yet she would tell Rachel to send so & so "a text or a picture."

Jan loved onions and hot peppers, rarely eating a meal without them.

Jan was a true friend to everyone, and she will be dearly missed by all who knew her and loved her. Everyone that knew her would agree that she made the world a better place, and we are better for having known her.

Jan was preceded in death by her parents, Burl and Cova Smith, sister and brother-in-law, Virginia and Thomas Spicer.

She is survived by her nephew, Sean Spicer and his wife Angela of Rogers, Arkansas, her niece Wanda Spicer of Greenwood, Arkansas, her long-time friend, Rachel Elrod of Aurora, Colorado, and several great nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends 12:00-1:00 PM, Monday, May 13, 2024, at Brashears Funeral Home. Funeral services will begin at 1:00 PM with Craig Villines officiating. Interment will immediately follow services at Big Sandy Cemetery, Huntsville. Pallbearers will be Eddie Hargis, Brent Hargis, Chris Taylor, Josh Eiland, Ron Bolinger, and Sean Spicer. Honorary pallbearers will be Fred Hargis, Jerry Hartis, Bill Brown, and Keith "Buffalo Healer" Dobbs. A Celebration of Life will be held in Aurora, Colorado, at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Best Friends Animal Society, 1312 Melissa Drive, Bentonville, AR 72712; and/or Movement 5280, 3190 South Grant Street, Englewood, CO 80113; two organizations Janice felt strongly about. Services are entrusted to Brashears Funeral Home and Crematory of Huntsville.

Cemetery Details

Big Sandy Cemetery

7693 Madison County Road #2340
Huntsville, AR 72740

Previous Events

Receive Friends

MAY 13. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Brashears Funeral Home and Crematory
509 North Gaskill Street
Huntsville, AR 72740
(479) 738-2123
<https://www.brashearsfuneralhome.net/>

Funeral Service

MAY 13. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Brashears Funeral Home and Crematory
509 North Gaskill Street
Huntsville, AR 72740
(479) 738-2123
<https://www.brashearsfuneralhome.net/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Brashears Funeral Home and Crematory created a Funeral Service in memory of Janice Smith*



Brashears Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc. - May 13, 2024 at 08:43 AM



“ *Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Janice Smith.*



May 11, 2024 at 11:30 AM



“ *Diann Hargis and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Janice Smith.*

Diann Hargis and family - May 11, 2024 at 11:30 AM