

Jane Byrne Palmer

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April 21, 1940- November 22, 2023

Jane grew up surrounded by the Great Lakes. She was a "Michigan Gal", as her late husband, Edgar M. Palmer liked to say. Jane was born in Detroit, Michigan to Marty and Henry J. Byrne. She grew up and learned to swim in Grand Haven, Michigan on Lake Michigan. Growing up she also spent time at her Grandparent's cottage on Lake Huron, learning how to right a sunken canoe. Jane graduated from Grand Haven High School in 1958 where she played the snare drum in the marching band. Jane, always calm in a crisis, saved a young girl's life during a harrowing near drowning accident at the Pottawatomie Bayou in the summer of 1959. For this heroic service, she was awarded a Deputy Sheriff's Badge for Ottawa County.

Jane was an artist, and at the University of Michigan, she developed her talents, graduating in 1963 with a degree in Art History. Her lifetime mediums were pencil and ink line drawings, watercolors, silk screening, weaving, and creating wooden furniture for her family.

At the University of Michigan, she met and fell in love with Ed, and they were married Jan 4th, 1964. During their over 50 years of marriage, they raised two daughters, Amelia and Angela. In addition to a career of her own, Jane supported the homelife of her family and Ed's long career as a Mathematics Professor at Michigan State University. The family traveled to Europe multiple times to support Ed's work as a mathematician. As a student of art, these trips provided Jane an opportunity to see and study some of the great works of European Art.

Jane was a lifelong learner and found joy educating others. Her many careers supported these loves. Before the girls were born, Jane worked as a middle school art teacher in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Later, she served many years as the Art Director for Impression-5, Lansing's hands-on science museum. Continuing her passion for teaching, Jane taught adult education for Perry Public Schools for a decade and earned a Master's Degree in Adult and Continuing Education in 1991 from MSU. Finally, for a decade, Jane worked in development for MSU's public radio and TV station, WKAR.

Jane had passion and an eye for observations in nature. For years, she and Ed conducted frog and toad surveys together in Michigan. Her observations of nature were often the subject of her artwork. As a girl, Jane was a Mariner Girl Scout and fastidiously carried a jack knife in her adult life so that she could always be prepared. In their retirement, Jane and Ed designed a cottage in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, creating a place in nature where family continues to gather together. Always up for adventure, at the age of 81, she stowed away on a kayak trip to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Lake Superior.

After her husband died, she spent the remainder of her years in Oregon to be closer to family.

Jane will be remembered for her adventurous spirit, her big heart, her deep understanding of the human condition, and her loving compassion. Jane traveled back to the UP as long as she was physically able and never forgot her loving family and friends.

Jane was preceded in death by her parents Marty and Henry J. Byrne, and her husband Edgar M. Palmer. She is survived by her daughters Amelia Palmer Hansen (Chris Hansen) and Angela Palmer (Julian Fischer); grandchildren Isabelle Hansen, Andrew Hansen, Benjamin Fischer and Kyle Fischer; sister Mary Lou Rischar (Jim); and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

In lieu of flowers, consider a donation to Little Traverse Conservancy (Landtrust.org).

A Celebration of Life will be held in Portland, Oregon, and on Zoom, December 27th 3:00 pm Pacific time.

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