



Janna Brendtro

November 12, 1944 - January 21, 2022

Janna Louise Agena was born on November 12, 1944, to a pair of German-speaking Americans from Lennox, South Dakota: Meint Dirk "Mike" Agena and Jenola (Bultena) Agena. Janna married Dr. Larry K. Brendtro on July 14, 1973.

During the next five decades, they raised three children, re-parented several others, wrote books together, and traveled the world. Her life was also graced by seven grandchildren, nine dogs, a thousand hogs, and many farm cats. In between all of that, Janna pursued a Master's degree, edited a professional journal, and was an active member of her church.

She died on January 21, 2022, of acute myeloid leukemia. A memorial service will be held at Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church, in Sioux Falls, at 11:00 am on January 29, 2022; and the family will be present for visitation during the hour preceding the service. An interment of her ashes is planned for Mother's Day in the Lennox Cemetery. Memorials can be made to the Augustana University Library Association. <https://www.augie.edu/giving-augustana/annual-impact/augustana-library-associates>

Janna was a lover of books and stories, and so it is fitting that her story is as long as a book. Each time we tried to make it shorter, it grew by another hundred words. We hope you like it.

Janna's first memory was of her eyelashes being singed when she got too curious about a hot stove. But this memory was less about pain, and instead about the urgent, loving care supplied by her mother Jenola, who swooped in to rescue and comfort her. Janna's eyelashes grew back, and Jenola continued to be a wonderful mother.

Janna's first friend was her brother George, who was two years older, and who already knew much about the mechanical world, including how to repaint his own bicycle (with "boo paint"), and in later years, how to choose a reliable vehicle ("buy a Toyota"). George kept a watchful eye on Janna, and he would also supply her with three fantastic nephews to keep the Agena family name alive: Brian, Timothy (Janet), and Todd (Carey); plus two sisters-in-law, Linda (Nelson Schmidt) Agena, and the late Kay (Wachendorf) Agena; and four great-nephews and great-nieces: Meint, Megan, Zachary, and Jennifer.

Janna's father Mike did many things, including running the International Harvester dealership in Lennox, carpentry, and installing most of the initial barbed wire fence along South Dakota's portion of Interstate 29. He was fond of the phrase, "Measure twice, cut once." Her mother worked as a telephone operator and at her aunt's millinery. Jenola was forever a people-person with a distinctive laugh, who headed up committees and was active in many local clubs. She was also tall, a trait she passed on to both George and Janna.

As a young teenager, Janna won a radio show contest by correctly identifying the song "Blue Velvet," and the prize was a portrait-sitting from a fancy photography studio. Her favorite pose is included here. In her later teens, Janna became certified as a lifeguard and taught swimming lessons. The following summer, she was promoted to manager of the Lennox City pool.

Janna's youth was filled with all the joy a young girl could ask for. But it was also marred by loss.

If Janna's life had a watershed event, it was the death of her mother to breast cancer in May 1960, near the end of Janna's sophomore year of high school, and, a short time before her brother George's high school graduation.

Jenola's passing (at the young age of 50) was a tremendous void that her father Mike and brother George would spend many, many years struggling to fill.

It was less so with Janna: her grandmother and her aunts (especially Edna Drake) and a few women from her church all picked up right where Jenola left off, teaching her how to sew, craft, and cook. Together, they wrapped Janna with enough motherly instruction and attention to last several lifetimes. In turn, Janna would later bestow this same loving care upon her three children.

Janna's aunts also instilled in her a sense of confidence that inspired her to explore the world. One of her early adventures was a tour of Israel, Turkey, and Greece (by way of Lake Geneva, the Tower of London, Paris, and Zurich). She penned a column for the Lennox Independent after her trip, telling about how she had visited the Acropolis, stood in the final prison cell of the Apostle Paul, and traveled through "an Israel in the shadows of war." She left Tel Aviv seeing that the Holy Land "is truly living, not only of the past" and was "reminded to pray for the peace of Jerusalem," as in Psalm 122.

Janna graduated from Lennox High School with the Class of 1962, and earned a Bachelor's in English from the University of South Dakota in 1966. Her first stop after college was Southern California. She ventured there alone, applying for secretarial positions in Lutheran churches, and instead was offered a job as a first grade teacher in a private Lutheran elementary school in Costa Mesa. She accepted on the spot, and enrolled in a summer class at Long Beach State to learn about the pedagogy of reading, or, in other words,

the methods of teaching young students to read (a skill from which her three children would later reap the benefits).

In total, Janna spent six years in California, making great friends, taking road trips, leading youth camp outings, living on Balboa Island, and mastering Los Angeles traffic (initially in a '62 Nash Rambler wagon and then a white 1969 Ford Mustang hardtop coupe that she bought from Avis). She resigned her teaching position in the summer of 1972 and announced a "sabbatical" for her seventh year.

By any measure, her sabbatical was a smashing success. Within weeks, Janna's loving protectors back home in Lennox had found a way to set her up with a young Ph.D. named Larry, a native of Lennox and Crooks, SD, who had moved away to Ann Arbor for graduate school. He had already written his first book about youth work and was serving as the chief executive of Starr Commonwealth in Albion, Michigan, a network of residential schools for delinquents and at-risk kids.

Larry happened to be visiting Lennox at the same time as Janna in August of 1972. The two had crossed paths many times over the years, living on the same street as children, attending the same church, and even roller skating together once at Swan Lake. But none of that (not even Larry's icebreaker line about what the rain might do for the watermelon crop) had kindled anything, until the skillful intervention of her future mother-in-law, Bernice (Matz) Brendtro.

The fix-up began with a family picnic, and then a hike in Newton Hills park, which led to a movie, a road-trip, and a long-distance courtship (which in those days meant she mailed him photographs of herself holding pies she had baked), a trip to Phoenix with his grandparents, and then an engagement in Minneapolis. Janna recalls that Larry proposed without actually asking ("This

is for you"), and so she accepted his declarative in the subjunctive ("If you're asking, the answer is yes"), and, despite any initial misfires in verb tense, their future has merged with their present perfect forevermore.

Janna had been spending her sabbatical year based out of Denver, where she was nannying for two of her former students. She relocated to Michigan to join Larry, and while planning her wedding, she also helped manage the editing of Larry's second book, *Positive Peer Culture*. She would reprise her role as editor for each of Larry's next 14 books, plus hundreds of articles, chapters, and powerpoint slides.

The new couple first lived in Gladsome Cottage on Starr's wooded campus, squarely between two other cottages filled with teenagers placed there by the juvenile court system. From the very beginning, Larry and Janna's partnership was enmeshed with the goal of helping these youth in large ways and small. Several of the young men served as ushers at their small-town Lennox wedding. Janna and Larry proudly acted as stand-in parents for Starr residents at extracurricular activities, including for Mike Amundsen and John Seita, who both went on to do great things.

Living on a campus filled with juvenile delinquents also had its risks: one of them hotwired Janna's 1969 Mustang in the night, which she of course forgave. When the Detroit police returned her car, she declined to press charges because what the boy really needed was to come back and finish his time at Starr.

Larry's job at Starr Commonwealth required him to rub shoulders with a series of celebrity donors and notable benefactors who wanted to further his mission of serving children. As a result, Janna helped drive Pat Boone to the airport, received a wedding gift from Joan Crawford, had dinner with Art Linkletter, and held court with Dale Evans Rogers. Later, she was tasked with editing the

forewords that other great supporters of children had written for Larry's books, including Muhammad Ali, Desmond Tutu, and Matt Damon.

In 1981, after the Michiganian births of their three children (Daniel, Steven, and Nola), the Brendtros returned to South Dakota. They built a passive geosolar home on the old Distad homestead in Perry Township, midway between the towering cottonwoods and the original Aermotor windmill. On this farm they planted trees, walked beans, built sheds, mowed grass, raised Chester White and Berkshire hogs, went canoeing on the ponds, found kittens in the barns, and buried dogs under the windmill when they got too close to the highway.

Janna was very capable with her sewing machine and knitting needles; an avid reader; a saver of many things that might come in handy someday; a sightreading piano player; a talented tender of houseplants; and a maker of really good krumkake. She crossworded and cross-stitched, but was never cross. She rarely raised her voice in anger (perhaps twice that any of us can ever recall). She was also a faithful churchgoer, and joined a Lutheran congregation at every stop along her journey. "It's been my strength," she said of her faith.

In between all of the parenting and farming, Larry taught college and Janna found time to earn a Master's Degree in English at Augustana, along with a teaching certificate. For one of her final projects, she created and narrated a slideshow of her children acting out the literal meaning of common idioms using props from the farm, such as "kicking the bucket" and "putting their money on the barrelhead." It concluded with the words "The End" written on the backside of little Nola's big cloth diaper.

By the mid-1990's, Janna's sons (Daniel and Steven) had grown up and

headed to college, leaving her daughter Nola as an "only" child for the next three years. Both sons agree that the mothering they had received up to this point was top-notch. Yet it would pale in comparison to the gentle and indulgent nurturing (spoiling) that Nola received during the hot-cocoa-in-bed-every-morning era.

When their house emptied, Larry retired from teaching at Augustana. The couple was able to spend their last 25 years together criss-crossing the globe for his speeches and trainings: first to Australia, and then a never-ending set of trips to New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, Austria, Hungary, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, Israel, Italy, India, Belgium, Netherlands, Victoria and most other parts of Canada, all 50 states, and the territories of the Blackfoot, Cree, Six Nations, and Nisgaa' (and then eventually discovering they could also take trips just for fun).

Their many trips and trainings were anchored to Larry's fourth book, *Reclaiming Youth At Risk*, which he co-wrote with Augie professors Steve Van Bockern and Martin Brokenleg. Together, they brought the "Circle of Courage" model to life. Janna and Larry hosted world-renowned training seminars, edited almost 100 quarterly issues of a professional journal for youth workers, and ran a bookstore and framing gallery on Main Street Lennox (in the same building where Janna's great-grandfather had founded Bultena Hardware a century earlier).

Janna was the indispensable writing partner for Larry, as an editor and proofreader extraordinaire. By our estimates, she helped craft and refine no fewer than 2 million words of copy in her lifetime, including 48 years of improvements upon the work of Larry and his colleagues (and also many of her children's term papers). Her patient and ever-accurate corrections made all of us into better writers.

Over the years, Janna and Larry experimented with living elsewhere, including a log home in the forest near Nemo, South Dakota; cabins on the water at Grand Traverse Bay and Lime Lake in Michigan; a brick cottage perched on the Kalamazoo River in Albion, Michigan; and condos near the ocean in Newport Beach, in Costa Rica, and on Kauai. Janna also voyaged with her friend Judy along the Rhine and Moselle Rivers in Germany, and down the Amazon River in Brazil. Yet, after all of those adventures, nothing compared to the sunset splendor and easy familiarity of Lincoln County, South Dakota, and so Larry and Janna have been permanent residents on the farmstead ever since.

From childhood through adulthood, Janna collected friends who were so much like family that their names are still revered in our household today: Judy (Felker) Batho and Kay (Wachendorf) Agena from her early years in Lennox; Patty (Glaim) Sonnabend and Beverly (Borden) McGinnis from her time in Rapid City; Margie (Postel) Bradshaw from her years in Costa Mesa; Barb Ness (and Carin, Carla, Sean, Timothy, and Arlin) from her years at Starr Commonwealth in Albion, Michigan; Jeanie Mayer (and Bob, Sarah, and Nick) from First English Lutheran and then again at Spirit of Joy; Lesley duToit and family from her many trips to South Africa; and Beate Kreisle in her travels to Germany. There are dozens and dozens of others, including the Arltons, Bakkenes; Brokenlegs, Buuses, and Van Bockerns; along with her neighbors of four decades, the Musches (across the pond) and the Valentiens (across the road). All of these friendships endured for decades, interrupted only by death. Janna also found a second family when her father remarried, including Dorothy (Burns) Agena and children Lilette, Charlie, and Roseanna. And Janna was very fond of her faithful cousin Rosalie Lyons, who texted her every Monday.

On the professional side, Janna and Larry continued to maintain close ties with the leaders, staff, and youth at Starr Commonwealth, and they made

countless trips back to the Albion campus. They received word in 2020 that the student library in Webster Hall was being re-named in honor of both Janna and Larry, "who dedicated their lives to serving children and families" and who have been "an incredible team and force, changing the world through education and determination." The naming ceremony has been delayed by Covid and will occur later this year.

Janna shared just two regrets about her life: that she felt she hadn't spent enough time in her later years being involved in her community, and, that she may have passed too much time using the apps on her phone. She also expressed disappointment that she was not able to carry out her plan of European adventures with each of her grandchildren, like the unforgettable trip to London that she took with Raena.

Perhaps one of Janna's most harrowing triumphs was surviving an F1 tornado in August of 2021. It traveled due east from Lennox and flattened two barns, shredded 40 of the trees they had planted, and opened up a hole in the roof which let in an evening's worth of rain. But Janna and Larry emerged from the basement unscathed, with the windmill and the cottonwoods still standing.

Genealogy and heritage were important to Janna. She corresponded with distant relatives, made charts, and even made a point of visiting Helmut Agena, her father's cousin, while on a trip to Germany. From their research, Janna noticed a pattern where the names "Meint" and "Dirk" had been used consistently in the Agena family tree for three centuries, including her father. Inspired by her discovery, her nephew Brian then carried this tradition forward when naming his firstborn. Janna's own first and middle names were derived from her great-grandmother and grandmother; and in similar fashion, she named her own daughter (Nola Kristine) after her mother Jenola and mother-in-law Bernice Christine (Matz) Brendtro.

Janna's parents spoke Low German (Plattdeutsch), the variety common in the coastal lowlands, including along the boundary between Germany and the Netherlands. (Janna credited her above-average height to that near-Dutch influence on the Highstreet side.) However, speaking any kind of German during or after World War II was frowned upon in Lennox, and so her parents stopped using it anywhere except with each other. Janna learned some in high school, along with a little French.

Janna was also an honorary Scandinavian. After marrying a man with Nordic roots, she was more than happy to supply our family with uffda-worthy krumkake, rosettes (rosetbakkelser), and lefse for the holidays, and she proudly placed a Velkommen mat at her front door.

Janna was preceded in death by her parents and her brother George; her beloved aunt Edna (Bultena) Drake; and her grandparents, Jacob Jansen Agena, Louisa Katherine Boebel, George Bultena, and Hannah Highstreet/Hoogestraat. She was preceded on her paternal line by her great-grandfather Meint Uden Dirks Agena, son of Dirk Meints Agena, son of Meint Uden Agena, son of Dirk Meints Agena, son of Meint Uden Dirks Agena, son of Dirk Ihmels Agena, born in 1672. On her maternal side, Hannah was the daughter of Janna Jennie Amelsburg, who was the daughter of Antje Janssen Leising, born in 1813.

Janna approached her illness with the same serenity, sweetness, and grace that she carried everywhere. This made her a favorite of her nurses. Her hospital rooms were an epicenter of pastoral care, but more often it seemed that Janna was the one offering encouragement and ministry to the many chaplains and pastors who came to visit. She was grateful for the support of Pastor Jeff Eisele, Susan and Paul Rohde, and her fellow members of the Spirit of Joy Choir. Her license plate read "COURAGE," and she was a living

testament to choosing faith over fear.

She spent most of her final days at home, warmly situated next to the big stone fireplace. Janna went about the business of dying in the same way in which she lived: patiently, generously, and without complaint, while surrounded by her family and a steady stream of visitors from that great web of devoted friends who were really no different than kin. She continued to offer gentle nurturing to each of us who tried to care for her. Next to her bed hung artwork by her grandchildren, as well as a favorite painting of the Avalon harbor on Santa Catalina Island.

Even in her illness, she continued to edit, including portions of the Faith Over Fear series. And as recently as last week, Janna was making corrections to early drafts of her obituary (which she thought was too long), and fixing mistakes in a typed copy of her hospice care plan.

Janna is survived by her husband Dr. Larry K. Brendtro, Lennox; her children, Daniel K. Brendtro, Steven L. Brendtro, and Nola K. Conner; their spouses, Jen, Melissa, and Scott; seven grandchildren: Raena, Cade, Adrienne, Addison, Emmy, Zoe, and Kai; and three grand-pets: Lucca (of Sioux Falls, SD), Jasper (Alcester, SD), and Milo (Pensacola, FL).

Augustana University Library Association <https://www.augie.edu/giving-augustana/annual-impact/augustana-library-associates>

We've found ourselves asking how we could ever survive the loss of a mother so grand. We don't know. However, we do know it's possible, because Janna lost her own wonderful mother as a teenager and then spent her next 62 years living a life like this. The end of Janna's lifetime is the beginning of our call to do the same.

In a larger sense, Janna is also survived by each stranger who took the time

to read this far. In her absence, we invite all of you-family, friend, or newcomer-to join us as we attempt to spend our lives in the same way she did: to carry on with grace and purpose in the face of loss; to practice patience with others and forgive them swiftly; to embrace the riches of our short time on earth; to help teach children how to read and think; to remain active in our communities and improve the lives of all our youth; to spend less time on our phones; to be related to everyone you meet; and of course, to strive for pretty good grammar.

To view the service online use the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55uFi7fTyLE>

Tribute Wall

TK

“ *What an absolute beautiful legacy your dear mother has left you all. And what eloquent words you used to tell such a story of a life lived well!!* ”

Tami Koppang - July 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ *Sincere condolences to the Brendtro family. Larry, my regards, and smiling memories of early days with Janna, George, and Donald.* ”

Douglas G WIERENGA - February 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you.* ”



Sherri castro - February 20, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AW

“ *What a blessing Janna has been to so many including me. Janna was a gracious host and made you feel instantly accepted and comfortable. I loved seeing her working quietly anticipate and organise so things went so smoothly. She is so missed.* ”

Andrew White - February 18, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ Hello Larry,
My thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family. Janna was a bright light that kept your Reclaiming Youth philosophy burning into the hearts and minds of many educators. You would speak of your wife often at your presentations in Regina and how hard she worked with The Circle Of Courage. My Mother passed in November of 2020 from the same diagnosis as Janna. We are never ready for the passing of our best friend, but trust that she is in a better place.

Kelley Meyer - February 18, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RF

“ What a beautiful life well lived, with a legacy that will ripple through the ages. My thoughts and prayers to her friends and family.

Randall Farmer - January 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM

FE

“ I send my deep condolences and my congratulations for a life well lived. Thank you for all you brought this world and the millions of children, youth and youthworkers your contributions have impacted. You leave the world better for having been with us. Thank you.

Frank Eckles - January 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

FE

“ I send my deep condolences and my congratulations for a life well lived. Thank you for all you brought this world and the millions of children, youth and youthworkers your contributions have impacted. You leave the world better for having been with us. Thank you.



Frank Eckles - January 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Dear Dr. Larry Brendtro and the bereaving family. Janna exemplified courage and care at the same time. Jessy and I had great opportunities to spend time with Janna and Larry in India and Canada. We pray for peace to Larry and all the family members.

Samuel Mammen - January 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MO

“ Dr. Larry Brendtro and family (especially to Dan) My deepest sympathy to each one of you in your great loss. Janna was a classmate of mine during the years we were getting our Master's degrees. We both had families and lived in the same area. I was Norwegian- Janna was Norwegian through osmosis. I still have her recipe for Lemon Bread...we shared recipes during our class breaks! We visited many times about our Augustana connections. I taught at WHS, LHS and O'Gorman High School in Sioux Falls. A student of mine gave me a piece of the Berlin Wall after it collapsed. I still have it! If I remember correctly, that student was Dan Brendtro who visited with me many times in the O'G Library. Even at that time I knew Dan came from a remarkable family. How wonderful it is to know that Janna is HOME and at peace. God's richest blessings on all her family.

Mary J Osthus - January 28, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ Janna left such an enormous legacy of love to so many around the world. Using her amazing gifts of writing and loving, which touched so many of us. You always felt like you were the only person in the room when she talked with you. How greatly she will be missed.

Scott Larson - January 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DP

“ *Janna was an amazing woman. I am so sorry to learn of her illness and passing. Never having experienced a relationship you (Larry, Daniel, Steven, and Nola) were blessed to have with Janna I'm overwhelmed thinking how much you must be hurting - the void you must feel. My deepest sympathy.*

I will remember Janna from the last time the Matz family was together in the Black Hills. As a Matz cousin I haven't done my part of keeping in touch with all and I had just begun starting to accumulate contact info, Janna's obituary is my inspiration to accomplish this! My love and thoughts be with you and again on Mother's Day.

Darla Rae (Matz) Perman - January 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ *What a great tribute to a great woman. Wish I could have met her in person.*



Tom Hovland - January 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ *What a beautiful tribute to an amazing woman! I knew Jana from FE in Lennox, but didn't get to see her often as that must have been in their traveling years. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you. May you find comfort in all those wonderful memories and the realization you will see her again.*

Linda Blitsch-Noonan - January 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LR

“Wow, what an amazing, inspiring woman truly spreading love everywhere she went! I am so sorry for your loss but so happy that she was in your lives.



Lisa Reiner - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AL

“Our deepest sympathy to all the family

Arlo & Vonnie. Larson - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

HJ

“Rest In Peace Janna, friends forever! I remember you being my first dance partner at our first High School Friday night after game dance. Friends since grade school and through the years!
Herman

Herman Janssen - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BF

“Thank you for sharing her beautiful life and story. May you be blessed with happy memories during this difficult time.



Beth Fredrickson - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KE

“ So sorry for your loss, but how blessed you are to have a mother that was so amazing. To have that heritage is an awesome blessing. Thanks for sharing her story. It is certainly inspirational. May the peace of GOD surround your entire family and may you continue to be inspired to continue your wonderful mother’s legacy. It’s a high calling!

Kim Emery - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Steve and family. It was a pleasure to read your mom’s story. What a wonderful legacy she has passed on to her family and friends. God’s peace.

John and Eunice Stell - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Such sad news of Janna's passing. May her beautiful soul rest in peace. Long life to all her family.

Martin Stabrey - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KK

“ That was a beautiful tribute to an amazing woman and it was so much fun to really hear about her life. Thank you for sharing her story. May God bless you all.

Kari Kingma - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AV

“ *There is no better life lived, than one filled with stories that touch other lives in wonderful ways.*



Andrew Brooking Vos - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LI

“ *Though I never met this amazing woman, I feel as if I just did. I want to tell you, Janna's family, this is one of the most beautiful and inspiring obituaries I've ever read. Thank you!*

Lisa - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ *Sincere condolences dear Larry and the whole family*



Emmanuel Grupper - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ *Janna lived and displayed the fruits of the spirit found in the principles of Christ Jesus. Janna and Larry were the perfect host to me and my wife Betty (deceased) in 2014.*

Donald Scott - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

ND

“ Larry and family: My sincere condolences on the loss of Janna. What a tribute to her the family has written. I feel as if I knew her in life. My thoughts are with you and your family. Nancy Dickinson

Nancy S Dickinson - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

ND

“ Larry and family,
My deepest condolences on your great loss. The tribute to Janna was inspiring and made me feel as if I had known her in life. My thoughts are with you.
Nancy Dickinson

Nancy S Dickinson - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ i am so sorry for your loss and love you guysâ
aj,



Sara Mayer - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

EL

“ I am so happy Janna's path crossed mine. Even then I knew she was an extraordinary woman. As I read her obituary, her life is such an inspiration! She has left footprints everywhere for others to follow. She leaves behind a true and powerful legacy. Oh and I share her heritage of being raised with Plattdeutch! You all are blessed indeed to have had such an intimate relationship with Janna as a Mom, wife, and friend. My prayers are with you all!



Elaine Lee - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JK

“ I only knew Janna through mutual friends and at social gatherings, but I remember her soft-spoken voice and her genuine smile. She was a joy to be with. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Judy Knadel - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ I know this woman in her passing because of the great chronicle of life (vs. obituary) provided. This is so refreshing, as what happens in the "dash" of our lives is what should be shared and chronicled for future generations to appreciate.

Mary Maxwell - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ Dear Larry, Daniel, Steven, Nola, and children,

My heart is heavy and hurts for you at the news of Janna’s passing. I knew her from our days at Prince of Peace in Costa Mesa, where she had just begun teaching and I was a high school student in the church youth group. I have so many sweet memories of the retreats, slumber parties, and other group activities we shared. Although time and distance separated us, we did stay in touch on occasion. I even got to reunite with Janna and meet Larry on two of their trips back to California along with our friend Margie. It was always like no time had passed no matter how long it was between visits. Thinking of Janna makes me smile!

You have my deepest condolences. You will be in my prayers for peace and comfort as you grieve. May you find strength in your memories of Janna’s faith and kindness and in the love of friends and family that surround you.

Judy Perkins - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

WB

“ Dear Larry, Daniel, Steven and Nola: Please accept my deepest condolences for the passing of Janna. She was a kind and gentle person who always treated me like family when I attended the Black Hills Seminars. The memories of her many kindnesses will be stored in my heart and mind forever. Waln



Waln K Brown - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ Dear Larry and family, I am so sorry for your great, great loss. This obituary is both beautiful and meaningful. Clearly, it honors a woman who lived life large. ---- Janet

Janet D. Blank-Libra - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Love to all of you! Janna is one of the kindest, most humble people I have ever met. She was so intelligent it exuded from her, but always so quiet about it. An example for all of us, I will always try to be more like her. Iâ€™m sure she is in heaven watching over her family!



Cathy Smith - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ Love to all the family!



Linda Kramer - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Many sympathies on Janna’s passing. She was a treasured friend of my mom’s and encouraged me to meet up with Steve in Pensacola after my mom’s passing, which I did. Hugs to your family 🙏🥹



Susan Celeste Hixson nee Felker - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ My deepest condolences to you all. Janna clearly had so many people who loved her. That makes her extremely blessed. May your wonderful memories of her bring you comfort.

With Sympathy,
Lisa Miller

Lisa Miller - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ My deepest condolences to you, Larry, and to your family in the loss of this wonderful woman. My mother passed from this awful disease as well, and up until now, I'd not known of anyone else who had faced it. I am sad for you! At the same time, having read this incredible story of Janna's life, I am filled with peace and celebrate with you on life so richly and fully lived. Now I am sorry that I did not come to know her better and to have been party to her engaging spirit. Surely her lessons in living will remain and her memory will always be with those who were able to call her friend! God bless you, Larry. I will be thinking of you and yours in the days to come.

Brad Heegel - January 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ *My sincere sympathy to your family. I remember Janna at the pool in our younger days. Wow. She was an amazing person.*

Bonnie Vietor Wirkus - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DN

“ *Beautiful Tribute to your amazing Mom!*

Diane Neu - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ *Larry and Janna’s writing and work have influenced the course of my life. Thank you for your generous contributions to the world. My deepest sympathies for the loss of your beloved.*



Kimberly Mackey - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ *My condolences to all of you. I have been a student of Dr. Brendtro and never met your mother but I have to join the thousands who, undoubtedly, will be impacted by this life story. What a wonderful woman and family. Thank you. Much love and gratitude, Lynne*



Lynne Boley - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ My condolences to each of you. One of my fondest memories is attending 4-H meetings at their wonderful home. What a well written tribute poured from the heart of her legacy, through the minds of her children to the ink of the pen. God bless as you rest in grace of the Almighty.

Brock Rops - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ I love you, Mama Bear.

Mark Freado - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

J1

“ Dr. Brendtro, my heart goes out to you and to all of your family. What a wonderful tribute to an obviously amazing woman. You have my deepest sympathy.



Jolene (Boyken) Mittelstedt, Augie class of 1991 - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

VH

“ Truer and more eloquent words could not be spoken about such a wonderful person and gentle soul. She notices even those who seem invisible. I knew Janna for nearly 20 years with Reclaiming Youth and she always treated me as a valued member of the community, and as a friend. I will miss her dearly.



Vikki Hennard - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Thank you for the wonderful recalling of a life well lived. God bless you all as you miss Janna

Joel Sunde - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Larry,
My deepest condolences to you and your family on the loss of your wonderful wife. Janna was a gem - I will always remember her kindness towards me and everyone who came across her path. May your memories bring you peace. Thinking of you. Mary

Mary Steiner - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JK

“ our deepest sympathy to the family, she will be deeply missed but what a wonderful life she lived to the fullest. Whenever I saw her she always had a wonderful smile. We are all richer for having known her.



Jim and Pat Koerner - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LO

“ What a beautiful testament of a life well lived. Janna became a friend on JC and my first trip to Australia. She gave me my favorite book of all time, *The Poisonwood Bible*, there and gave me great advice about coping with my future being the wife of a “public figure”. Janna was always so kind to me and reached out many times after J passed away so suddenly. I was always so grateful. She will be missed. My deepest condolences to the entire family.

Lorri - January 25, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DK

“ *May Jannas faith and trust in the love of God also help you trough these dark days.*



Dietmar and Beate Kreisle - January 24, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ *Dear Brendtro Family,
Please accept my deepest condolences. Janna's warmth and kindness will always be remembered. I am so sorry for your loss.*

Mary Avair - January 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ *I Am So Sorry For Your Lossâ ँĳ, 🥹 Love You
Allâ ँĳ,*



Sara Mayer - January 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ *Larry and family, Janna was such a sweet person. She had a smile for everyone she met. God bless the Brendtro family.*

John G. Mogen - January 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

WC

“ I remember Janna as a loving, happy and fun-loving person who always treated me as part of her family. She was a wonderful cook and always had special breakfasts for us when we stayed with her and Larry at the farm.



Wayne Conner - January 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ So sorry to hear of Janna's death. You all have our deepest sympathies. Janna was a remarkable person with so many talents. She was kind, funny, loving and supportive to those she met throughout her life. She will be missed by so many. God bless and may your good memories of Janna help you through your grief.

Joyce Hubregtse - January 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ Our deepest sympathy to all the family .

Arlo & Vonnie. Larson - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

NB

“ Our condolences, Larry, and to your family. We are thinking and praying for you all. She will be greatly missed. She was so sweet and full of goodness. 🙏



Nadene Bamsey - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KS

“ I’m so saddened to learn of Janna’s death. She lived such an active life with love of family and travel. May all who knew and loved her find peace in beautiful memories.

Karol Straub - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

GV

“ Larry, So sorry to hear of your loss. I've noticed your names and stories now and then. Sounds like you and Janna have had a most adventurous life. Peace. Gene

Gene Vietor - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BE

“ My sympathy to you in the loss of Janna, my LHS 1962 classmate. My thoughts and prayers are with you!

BettyHolst - January 21, 2022 at 12:00 AM