Aurora Baxter

July 3, 1972 ~ February 13, 2020

Aurora "Rory" Dawn Baxter, 47, of Sandy, Utah, passed away in the early morning hours of 13 February, 2020. Her final moments of mortality were spent at home in the arms of her husband, just as she desired.

Rory (given name Kimberlee) was born in Spokane, Washington, on 3 July 1972 to Michael and Rebecca Grubb. During her senior year of high school she was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She graduated from Alta High School in Sandy, Utah, in June 1990. Kimberlee later attended Salt Lake Community College, studying Early Childhood Development. Her passion for children resulted in employment at Challenger School, teaching preschool and elementary grades.

A much-too-long three months after he returned from serving an LDS mission, Kimberlee married her high school sweetheart, Preston Baxter, in the Salt Lake Temple on 21 July 1993. They moved to Logan, Utah, where Preston studied Civil Engineering at Utah State University; Kimberlee worked at a local preschool and as a Resident Assistant in married student housing. They also welcomed their first daughter, Ceana, while living in Logan.

At the conclusion of Preston's undergraduate studies, the Baxters moved to Oregon just before welcoming their second daughter, Kaeli. While Preston continued with additional school studies, Kimberlee was very involved in raising their family and worked as an apartment manager for their complex. Over the years, the family fell in love with their little town, Independence, Oregon, and purchased a home. Additional children arrived, sons Caiden and Colton, and they literally moved to the other end of the street into a larger home. Roots continued to grow deeper as the family branches expanded to include two more children, Kylan and Kelsianne. During this time, Kimberlee changed her legal name to Aurora and adopted the nickname "Rory."

Rory owned and operated an in-house preschool, Tiny Scholars, where she welcomed many young children into her home and heart. She later owned and operated PhotoMoments by Rory, a photography service specializing in capturing special family moments such as births, weddings, graduations, and other events. One of Rory's photographs became the cover art for the local telephone book. She was tireless in her advocacy for her children's education, which eventually led to the Baxter children enrolling in an online, virtual, public charter school. When one of her children struggled with speech as a toddler, she took ASL classes and taught signing to him to allow for their communication, and later used that skill in other settings to serve others in the deaf community. She became involved in state politics when critics attempted to close the education choice that was working so well for her family and children, rallying other parents and advocates to her cause. She was active in her church congregation, serving in many capacities, including as Primary President.

At the tender age of 39, Rory was diagnosed with breast cancer. She attacked this challenge with the same vigor and optimism as all of her other challenges. Her gratitude, dedication, and faith were an inspiration to all. The

cancer was forced into remission for several years until eventually re-metastasizing in several bones. Due to the new location in her body, treatment options were severely limited. The family agonized about leaving so many friends in Oregon but eventually moved back to Utah in 2017 to be closer to family, near additional cancer expertise, and to pursue new employment opportunities for Preston. Most of all, Rory enjoyed having herself and children surrounded by cousins and other family.

Rory was preceded in death by her best friend from high school, Kenna Marshall, along with several aunts and uncles. She is survived by her husband of more than 26 years, Preston; her six children: Ceana (Anthony, husband), Kaeli, Caiden, Colton, Kylan and Kelsianne; her precious grandchildren, Carter and Evan Laney; parents: Michael and Rebecca Grubb; brother: Sean (Rayna, wife); her grandmother and many cousins, aunts, nieces and nephews.

Friends and family are invited to visit on Sunday, 16 February, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E 10600 S in Sandy, UT. An additional viewing will take place on Monday, 17 February, at 9:30 am at the LDS chapel located at 9636 S 1700 E in Sandy, UT. The funeral service will be held at 11:00 am, with interment immediately following at Larkin Sunset Gardens. Larkin Mortuary is handling funeral arrangements.

In lieu of flowers or other donations to the family, please consider supporting the recovery fund for her brother-in-law, Tyler Baxter. Send Venmo donations to @Jaclyn-Baxter and include the comment "From Rory to Tyler," or search for "Fight for Tyler" on GoFundMe.com. The family thanks all for their heartfelt prayers, letters, well-wishes and condolences.