

Becky Williams Thomas

May 26, 1951 ~ April 13, 2024

Becky Williams Thomas was born May 26, 1951, the first child of Rex Winder Williams, Jr., and Rosemary Brandley Williams. For nearly 73 years she was a loving and kind mother, child, and sister. She sadly passed away on April 13, 2024, after a brief illness. She spent her last days in the presence of friends and family.

Like the books she loved so dearly, Becky's life was lived in chapters connected by evolving common themes.

As a child Becky was known for her appetite for the written word. She read anything and everything. She fondly related stories of her father giving her books that were, at the time, swathed in controversy. She learned crafts, cooking, and sewing from her mother. Her family fostered her desire for knowledge and splendor. She excelled as a scholar (a label that remained apt even in her final days). She was a member of the East High School Class of 1969, where she met David S. Thomas, to whom she was married for 30 years. She obtained a degree from the flagship school of higher learning in her hometown of Salt Lake City and went on to a brief career assisting patients at Primary Children's Medical Center in the psychiatric ward. She then transitioned to motherhood where her intelligence, thirst for knowledge, and creativity shined.

Becky was a devoted mother of three. She spent the late 1970s and early 1980s traversing the streets of Los Angeles with one child held by the hand, another in a stroller, and the third on her back. Relocating back to Salt Lake City in the mid-1980s, Becky and Dave fostered a home in which each child was given the confidence and means to follow their passions, whether academic, physical, recreational, or artistic, wherever it took them. Becky raised her children knowing that each was different and boosting each accordingly. She imparted to each child a sense of possibility. On the verge of scary change, she was known to advise: "Anyone can do anything for at least a year."

Becky employed motherhood to advance her own academic and artistic interests. She dove into her kids' research projects and assignments, many of which might as well have borne her name when completed. She served as a modiste, designing and sewing children's cocktail dresses and Halloween attire from whole cloth. She took her love of the written word to a different level by writing reviews of children's books for Parent Express and becoming all too well-known at the King's English Bookstore.

As her children grew and left home, Becky rededicated herself to scholasticism, art, and the wilderness. This last chapter is perhaps where Becky's life took on its most complete form which, consistent with her evolved persona, led to the adoption of the new moniker "Bebe", bestowed by her grandchildren to whom she was devoted.

Becky, in non-traditional fashion, re-enrolled at her alma mater to obtain a bachelor's degree in English and then moved on to higher levels of academia in the fields of poetry and book arts. She was at home spending time in the atelier with her cohorts, many of whom were less aged than her own children, and who became another family. She

wrote poems and fashioned the books in which they resided. She fabricated the paper, the spines, the covers, and the content. She delved into poetry. She was known to talk at length on the topic of literary constraints and the glory of La Disparition, in which Perec avoided the letter “e” in its entirety. She went so far as to rationalize not repairing a broken oven as application of constraints in cooking. She took the skills inherited from her mother to evolve from “seamstress” to “fiber artist”, creating works displayed in galleries where she was embraced by the academic and artistic relationships she so cherished. These friendships persisted to the end, providing comfort at her bedside in her final days.

In this phase, Becky also embraced the wild world. She climbed, cycled, and hiked among the redrocks near Moab and in the City of Rocks. She swam in clear cenotes and sat on beaches abroad watching birds for what seemed to be eons. She wandered the foothills in contemplation and to find the new. These exploits became a part of her and her work as she wove with native grasses and incorporated organic objects into her art. It’s no wonder that, to Becky, the Spiral Jetty reflected a near perfect expression of majesty.

Becky passed away amid her loving family and closest friends listening to readings of poetry and French existentialists. She asked her grandchildren what they were reading and what escapades were on the horizon. She passed away at dawn ensconced in the atmosphere she fostered for herself as well as others. She will be missed dearly by all who knew her.

Becky is remembered by her children, Nate (Jinna), Abby (Rob), and Libby (Sebastien) and her grandchildren, Matilda, Stella, Otto, and Sage, each of whom embodies her spirit in different ways – the thrill of the open air, the love of books and art, and otherwise. She is also remembered by her siblings, Brooke and Terry Tempest Williams, Rex (“Joey”) and Jann Williams, Nan and Steve Hasler, and Thomas and Amy Williams.

A celebration will be held at a later date. In the meantime, in place of flowers, the family asks either that donations be made in Becky’s honor to Grow the Flow to aid the Great Salt Lake or, perhaps, people back a local emerging artist in some manner. Both are fitting ways to honor Becky's memory.

A final note: Pardon any inelegance in the foregoing. In honor of Becky’s passion, literary constraints were attempted. One certain vowel has been avoided in crafting this abridged digest of Becky’s life. This proved awkward when describing the life of a native of the Beehive State. It is, however, something that all involved agreed, is something Becky, too, might have tried, appreciated, and known to be an expression of love.