

# Janet Ellison

*September 9, 1943 ~ October 16, 2025*

Janet Ellison, daughter of David Joseph and Hazel Blood Ellison, passed away on October 16, 2025 at the age of 82. Brilliant, elegant, energetic, warm, quick to smile, an accomplished vocalist, a treasured friend, spouse, sister, aunt, stepmother and grandmother. Though nicknamed “Pink” by dear Aunt Kay Hardy Blood, she mostly wore purple and loved all things musical and French.

Janet grew up in the Avenues and Sugarhouse neighborhoods of Salt Lake City, graduating from Highland High in 1961 and the University of Utah in 1965, with Mortar Board, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Beta Kappa honors. She was a proud member of the Chi Omega Sorority and served as its Utah Chapter Treasurer.

A natural leader, Janet was involved in numerous University service organizations. She was selected to organize and chair the national convention of the Intercollegiate Association of Women Students held at the University of Utah in 1965, an event themed “The Challenge of Creativity.” This conference explored how women’s creative endeavors could enhance their learning, leadership and participation in civic and community affairs and even lead to opportunities in business management.

After graduation, Janet followed her mother’s path and became an educator, first in Salt Lake City and later in San Francisco, teaching French and music. Pursuing a personal challenge of creativity, she transitioned from the woman’s world of public education to build a successful career in the male-dominated business world, becoming a leader and example for other women who were joining the workforce in great numbers.

Throughout her entire business career, Janet helped people to be successful through training, counseling and consulting and by her own example of personal dedication and growth. In her transition into business, she worked for Career Design, a consulting firm with national scope, and Wells Fargo Bank. In one project, she was involved in developing and rolling out an employee planning and performance review system, which emphasized individual growth and success, across Well Fargo’s entire national banking division.

After obtaining an MBA from Golden Gate University while working full time, she joined Integrated Project Solutions, a San Francisco-based corporate training and consulting firm. At IPS, she had the opportunity to work with some of the world's most significant technology firms, traveling throughout the world to work with executives who were creating new products and strategic initiatives. Her typical assignment was to coordinate with executives from different corporate divisions in planning multi-year projects over just a single weekend. She also worked with the Stanford Center for Professional Development and renowned Stanford business faculty to create new professional development curricula, including a course titled “Managing Without Authority.”

While working in San Francisco, she was introduced to William S. (Sandy) Mackenzie by another former Salt Laker and parents’ friend, Gloria Rich Hendricks. Sandy’s mother also had Salt Lake ties, but the two had not crossed

paths. Beyond their Salt Lake roots, Janet and Sandy shared a love of learning, musical theatre, culture (especially French), travel (especially to Paris and to the Mackenzie cabin at the North Fork Club) and a love of Sandy's two daughters, Katherine (Katie) and Elizabeth. Janet and Sandy were married in Kaysville, Utah in 1992, creating a new family with Katie and Elizabeth.

After the unexpected passing of Janet's mother in 1999, Janet and Sandy relocated to Salt Lake City to help take care of her father and her aunt Evelyn Blood Mazuran. The move helped Janet and Sandy to deepen their relationships with her Utah family. Sandy also took advantage of Janet's overseas assignments, accompanying her on many business trips and never missing a trip to Paris. They shared one final trip to Paris in 2011 before Sandy passed away that year. Elizabeth tragically passed away before Sandy, but their family grew with Katie's marriage to Raky Bryant-Vick and the birth of their sweet daughters, Ayla and Loraine Bryant.

Music was Janet's true passion and source of creative inspiration. She was raised in a house filled with her mother's and brother Jim's piano music. Although deaf in one ear from an early age, Janet was recognized for her extraordinary singing voice. Her aunt Beatrice Ellison Dunn paid for music lessons from Blanche Christensen, a leading Utah vocalist, while Janet was still in high school. She sang everywhere she could–in high school and university a'capellas, large choirs, quartets and musical theatre. She was elected to Mu Phi Epsilon, a national women's music fraternity.

In San Francisco, Janet joined the Oakland Symphony Choir and later sang with the newly-formed San Francisco Symphony Chorus, one of only twenty-five professional members. She continued to perform as a soloist, in church choirs and, with Sandy, in musicals sponsored by Sandy's alma mater, the Town School for Boys. After returning to Salt Lake City, Janet sang with the Westminster Community Choir (now the Westminster Chorale) from 2019 to 2022, where she performed with her brother Tom. A highlight was the Choir performing Handel's *Messiah* with the Utah Symphony at the 2019 *Messiah* Sing-In.

In retirement, Janet continued her lifelong interest in self-improvement by studying and practicing Zen Buddhism. Her interest in meditation practice was enhanced by her experience with a Buddhist chaplain as Sandy was nearing his end of life. She continued her formal study with the Salt Lake Zen Group under the guidance of Zen Teacher Mark Esterman. After years of study and practice, in 2015, Janet participated in the Buddhist ceremony of Jukai, the formal, public receiving of Buddhist precepts. She continued her meditation practice until prevented by her health.

Perhaps Janet's training and practice in Buddhist precepts prepared her to accept some of the losses she incurred as her dementia worsened—she unwillingly gave up music, travel and the keys to the car. But over time, she appreciated what she retained, cherishing memories of her parents, Sandy, friendships and family celebrations. While in assisted living and even in memory care, she was quick to make friends and comfort others even as her life became more difficult. She appreciated the care she received from her brother Tom, as well as the caregivers at Legacy Sugarhouse Assisted Living, Intermountain Medical Oncology and Serenity Hospice. Special thanks to her hospice nurse Nikki Rodrigue and the staff at Legacy Sugarhouse Memory Care for their loving end-of-life care.

Janet is survived by brothers and sisters-in-law David H. Ellison (Sally), Portola Valley, CA; James E. Ellison (Carole), Rehoboth Beach, DE; and Thomas A. Ellison (Susan), Salt Lake City, UT; stepdaughter Dr. Katherine Mackenzie (Rakmun Bryant-Vick); stepgranddaughters Ayla and Loraine Bryant; as well as eight nieces and nephews and twenty-eight great nieces and nephews.

Please join us in celebrating Janet's life at the Alta Club, 100 E South Temple, Salt Lake City, on Saturday November 15 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., preceded by internment next to her mother Hazel and father David in the family plot at the Kaysville City Cemetery at 1 p.m. Janet was a passionate supporter of many causes, and so in lieu of flowers, Janet would want you to donate to a cause of your choice, or to Volunteers of America, Utah or to Utah Food Bank, two causes of particular significance to her.

Those wishing to view the Graveside service can click "Watch Service" or follow the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82485020960

Those wishing to view the Celebration of Life can click "Watch Service" or follow the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88111619825