

Kate Holbrook

January 13, 1972 ~ August 20, 2022

Kate Holbrook (born January 13, 1972) died August 20, 2022, her mortal life ended by a rare cancer of the eye that threatened for a decade before taking her from us over the course of the last year. We are utterly bereft, and we are also filled with the joy of her existence. Kate was born in Santa Barbara, California, in the desperate confusion of the early 1970s, to Kathleen Stewart and Robert Holbrook. Kate was raised by her mother and her grandmother, Belle Fillmore Stewart, in Provo, Utah. After serving a Church mission to Samara Russia and graduating from Brigham Young University, she moved to Boston because she'd loved a rainy afternoon spent there when she was 13. There she worked at Boston University, graduated from Harvard Divinity School with a Master of Theological Studies, and began a doctorate in Religious Studies at Boston University. She also met and married Sam Brown. In their middle 30s they realized that they were at heart mountain people and returned to Utah. They are the proud parents of three wonderful children: Amelia, Lucia, and Persephone Holbrook-Brown. In Utah, Kate completed her PhD (remotely) and started her career as an historian of Latter-day Saint women, employed by the Church History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She edited and/or wrote many books, articles, and other expressions of her careful thought and warm caring. She paid special attention in her scholarship to the relationships between food and religious community. Kate lived with abiding passion and care. She read voraciously and with great sympathy. In the last year of her mortal course, she fulfilled a lifelong dream of visiting Kenya, driven by her childhood reading of Out of Africa. Her entire being sparkled with the possibilities of literature, including the stories of East Africa and Karen Blixen.

Kate loved Jesus with her whole heart. There wasn't a part of her that didn't breathe God and Gospel. She was honored to lead teams to tell the story of the Latter-day Saints to outsiders and the stories of women to her fellow Saints. As she contemplated her passage from mortality with great sadness, it was not because she lacked confidence in the reality of an afterlife. Instead, she mourned her physical absence from the mortal lives of her beloveds. She held in her hands and her heart both the certainty that death is not the end of us and the terrible tragedy of mortality cut short.

Her father and her grandmother (beside countless generations of the ancestors she honored with her scholarly work) preceded her in death. The others remain, hallowed by her memory and her abiding presence. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, August 27 at 11am at the Bonneville Stake Center, 1535 Bonneview Drive in Salt Lake City. A viewing will be held the evening before from 5–7pm at the Larkin mortuary at 260 E South Temple in Salt Lake City. Kate loved flowers the way she loved food, viscerally. However, she asks that instead of giving flowers, well-intended friends donate to the Kate Holbrook Endowed Scholarship Fund at BYU for primary caregivers of young children pursuing graduate work in the humanities: https://kateholbrook.org/scholarship

For those unable to attend, the recorded service may be viewed by selecting the "Watch Service" button above.