

Mary Nebeker Larson

February 9, 1955 ~ April 14, 2025

Mary Nebeker Larson, wife, mother, grandmother, sister, friend and colleague passed away April 14 after an all-out battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 70. She was born in Augusta, Georgia, the daughter of June and Stephen Nebeker. Mary had a fiery and independent spirit that was tempered by her grounded values and a motivation to always do the right thing. She was tenacious in defending those she loved and cared about. She was unapologetically herself and approached others with compassion rather than judgement. Mary was a good listener and had the ability to speak her mind without causing offense. Friends often said they loved talking to her because she was “real”. Her authenticity was contagious and facilitated meaningful connections with everyone around her. She had an amazing memory and loved to read which allowed her to offer well thought out opinions.

Mary was a committed member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For the last 50 years she always had a calling. Her most impactful callings were probably as den mother to multiple packs of cub scouts, YW Pres., later as a Gospel Doctrine teacher, and working in the RS. She also served the last 2 years as a Pathway missionary promoting education worldwide. She continued in that calling virtually right up to the end. She will be remembered by those she served, loved and worked with.

Mary had a competitive side and was driven to be her best self. She was very athletic at a time when women’s sports were very limited. She was an excellent skier and as a young girl she could beat any boy or girl in the school in a foot race. She loved to swim, her strongest event was the butterfly, but she was good all around. She won events in the Salt Lake conference meet and then the high point award for her age group in an intermountain states swimming competition. Her love of water sports continued into her adult years and took place mostly behind a boat at Bear Lake or Lake Powell. She loved water skiing, surfing and tubing.

Mary enjoyed high school at East High where she was a cheerleader and made lifelong friends. She then attended the U of U where she played cello in the University philharmonic symphony. She affiliated with Chi Omega Sorority where her circle of friends grew. During her sophomore year she met and married the love of her life Brent Larson. Although she was only 20, she trusted Brent enough to follow him across the country to North Carolina for Dental school where she carved out her own path. She transferred to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill graduating in English Education, and then taught high school English in Silar City, North Carolina until Brent finished school. Mary and Brent then returned to Salt Lake City and raised their 4 children. Mary loved literature and took her family to Cedar City to the Utah Shakespeare festival for every one of the last 45 years. At age 53 she returned to the U of U and got a master’s degree in English and American Literature. She then taught English at Ensign College until retiring in 2022. She wrote multiple articles for various publications.

Mary loved her children and their friends who were always welcome, and several considered her a second mom. She served as Pres of the PTA at both Bonneville Elementary and East High and was the ultimate soccer mom, cheerleader and supporter for her kid's teams. She enjoyed and promoted education and the arts. Music lessons were a non-negotiable for her kids despite many battles over practicing. She loved playing the cello in a community orchestra, painting and taking art classes

Mary was a true Bear Laker. Her Laketown/Eastside family heritage made it part of her DNA. Her family spent years enjoying the Larson cabin on the west side and the Nebeker cabin on the east side of the lake. In her last years she and Brent built a wonderful refuge and place for their family to enjoy forever. She did everything with a purpose and her touch is found in every nook and cranny. She loved to patrol the waterfront on her 4-wheeler and welcomed day campers if they understood the private property lines and left the beach as they found it.

One of her great adventures later in life was becoming a grandmother to 11 grandchildren. Known to them as "Mamo" she provided unconditional love and support. Whether it was birthday shopping, holidays parties, or a simple Sunday dinner the grandkids knew that if Mamo was there, it would be a party.

Mary loved to travel and did so often, although she missed several locations she wanted to see because of leaving this life a bit early.

Mary was predeceased by her parents June and Stephen B Nebeker, her brother Stephen W Nebeker and nephew Michael Nebeker. She is survived by her sisters Jeanne Jardine (Jim) and Annie Christensen (Gary) and sister-in-law Holly Nebeker, also husband Brent A Larson and children Matthew B Larson (Ashley), Michael N Larson, Stephen R Larson (Laura) and Rachel A Enslin (Jake) and 11 grandchildren

Fortunately for her husband Brent, he retired at the perfect time and was able to be Mary's primary caretaker for 9 months while she battled her disease. We wish to thank her incredible medical team of doctors, nurses and therapists that helped Mary have months more time with her family. They couldn't have been better.

We will celebrate Mary's life with a Visitation on April 23, 2025 at Larkin Sunset Lawn (2350 E 1300 S) 6:00-8:15pm. On April 24, 2025 a visitation from 10:30-11:45 with a Memorial Service at 12:00 at the Yalecrest Ward (1035 South 1800 East SLC).

Those who wish to donate to the BYU-Pathway in Mary's name may do so by following the link:https://donate.churchofjesuschrist.org/contribute/byu-pathway

Those wishing to view the service via Zoom can click "Watch Service" or follow the link:https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/f2Sg5wOIY1GLe3T71VAHpi-q4WrxMZM3OQ4LQz7Hv-wWzuwom5Lrtt6GYMkDd