

Melanie Desautels

March 23, 1962 ~ September 26, 2021

Melanie was born at Fort Ord Army Post in California on March 23, 1962, to Howard Elwood Otteson and Dorothy Petersen Otteson. She entered this world as a welcome beautiful baby girl amongst three active brothers - Randy, Kevin, and Scott. Her inherent sweetness inspired Dorothy to nickname her ‘Sugar Babe’ - a moniker she used throughout Melanie’s life. Melanie’s enduring strength was forged by a necessity to hold her three roughhousing brothers at bay. She loved skiing the glassy waters and year-round snow of Oregon, as well as eating melted Velveeta cheese by the spoonful. The shared bedroom she decorated with her sister Valene was a vibrant clash of pinks, greens, and blues accenting yellow beds atop a neon pink carpet, all somehow made to work together in a way only Mel could accomplish. As a teenager, Dorothy encouraged her to become a vocalist, but her Farah Fawcett-style hairdo was better suited to modeling school, where she excelled and earned money far in excess of that imaginable by her peers working in ice-cream parlors and fast-food restaurants.

Melanie’s lifelong love for learning carried her from Sunset High School to BYU, where she studied humanities and accrued lifelong friends. She married Mitch Edwards in 1981, later divorcing but remaining a wonderful coparent to their three children, Chelsea, Nicholas, and Cameron. In a life full of achievements, Melanie considered her children her greatest.

In 2006, Melanie and Steve brought their five shared children on an unforgettable trip to Europe, culminating in their marriage amongst the picturesque lavender fields of Southern France. Melanie’s stepsons, Jordan and Justin, remain forever grateful of Melanie’s warm embrace of them as her own.

Melanie and Steve’s time together saw them swimming through the crystal waters of Hawaii, biking the undulant roads of Vermont in fall bloom, and exploring their home mountains of Park City - Steve often outpaced and in tow, but hand in hand and deeply in love, nevertheless.

Through it all, Steve’s deepest appreciation of Mel was found in simple observance of her guiding light, full heart, passionate friendships, love of bathes, and her ability to transform any space or outfit into a thing of wonder with her effortless beauty.

Beyond being the greatest wife, sister, daughter, friend, and curator of hats this world has ever known, Melanie was a teacher, healer, creator, and visionary of unmatched resolve. Through her example, we learned to love unconditionally in a world all to ready to place our unique characters in a box. A healer by nature, she possessed an innate mindfulness and emotional intelligence that found her helping us all, even in her own times of need. She shared this passion with the world through her chocolate company as the Leafy Mama, imbuing every bar with her entrepreneurial spirit, zest for color, and rich family tradition of chocolate making. There is no doubt that Christmas time memories of chocolate making with Dorothy, Chelsea, Valene, and their daughters are baked into every bite

as her chocolates make their way to the shelves of Whole Foods and other name-brand retailers from Utah to Oregon and beyond.

To know Melanie was to love her, and to understand her irreplaceable ability to light up any room. We will all strive to honor her incredible spirit, love every day and celebrate the great gifts that she brought to this world.

Rather than a traditional service, we will be holding an “open house” for Mel at Le Jardin’s Chateau at Larkin Sunset Gardens, where her friends and family can mingle and share memories.

When: Friday, October 15, 2021, 6:30-8:30pm

Where: Larkin Sunset Gardens/Le Jardin, 1950 E 10600 S, Sandy, UT 84092

A separate “Celebration of Life” will be held in the spring in Park City.

We encourage guests to dress as colorfully as they wish to reflect Melanie’s bright personality, love of color, and sunny outlook on life.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to The American Cancer Society:

https://www.cancer.org/involved/donate/memorial-giving.html