



Jessica Wheeler

FEB 18, 1969 - APR 17, 2025



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Jessica Wheeler

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Jessica Wheeler, a bright soul whose life included grit, creativity, and an unrelenting love for animals, died at 56 after a brave battle with early onset frontotemporal degeneration and bulbar ALS.

Born in Houston, Texas, Jessica was the third of four children and known to many as a twin in spirit to her younger brother Geoffrey.

Jessica's industrious spirit was ever present as she earned her keep with odd jobs in Philadelphia before returning to Texas. Her hands were rarely idle: she worked in black-and-white photo labs, launched a yardwork business ("Wheeler Works," earning her the affectionate title Compost Queen), and later pursued higher education with relentless passion. Jessica earned a BA in Kinesiology and a Master's in Exercise Science from the University of Houston, eventually joining the faculty at the same institution. Never one to settle, she studied for an MBA and sold kombucha while fostering countless rescue dogs, some of which became permanent family. For many years, Jessica was a dedicated student and black belt in Chayon Ryu Martial Arts, training under Grand Master Kim Soo. She not only mastered the discipline but gave back by teaching younger generations at the school—passing on strength, grace, and focus.

Jessica's heart was full of art. She painted prolifically, studied at the Glassell School of Art, and left her mark on countless canvases—including a cherished tree mural that still lives on her brother's living room wall.

A devoted animal lover, she was drawn to horses as a child and never met a cat or dog she couldn't love—or save. Her life was not without hardship; Jessica wrestled with loneliness, emotional pain, and depression, but through it all, she remained determined, loving, and entirely herself.



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Jessica's family honors her complex legacy with deep love and gratitude. She will be remembered for her fierce intelligence, her stubborn will, her compassion for animals, her artistic gifts, and the blazing fire she carried.

She is survived by her brother Geoff, sister Meredith, mother Irene, step-father Doug, beloved pets, and the many people whose lives she touched.



Tribute Wall

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Sue Barnum lit a candle in honor of Jessica.

Jessica's spirit was restless but brilliant and irrepressible when she was not held down by her illnesses. I love her deeply and feel her passionate presence with me still. Sue Barnum San Antonio, Tx

May 6 at 10:33 AM



Josh Baird posted:

Jessica was one of the first people I met at my UH job. She was always so vibrant, energized, and ready to converse. Her personality was inviting and empathic. I loved talking to her about her dogs, and I will never forget her bringing in some homemade kombucha for me to try (it was really good). I also remember the long conversations we had regarding the shock of her diagnosis and her eventual departure from UH. It was hard on her, but she was ready to take on the challenge just as she had always done with any obstacle in her life. Jessica will be sorely missed, and I am truly grateful to have connected with her in this life.

April 30 at 8:19 AM



Geoffrey Wheeler shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

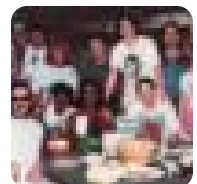
April 29 at 9:42 AM



Pete Wagner shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Good Times with the 90's NPL Party Crew!

April 27 at 9:21 AM





Tribute Wall

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Pete Wagner lit a candle in honor of Jessica.

I knew Jessica back in the early 90's as we worked together at NPL in the machine print dept. In our young 20's we had lots of energy but she was always one "cup of coffee" ahead of everyone driven to set out her goals! Jessica's dad Harvey interviewed me when I was 18 and remained my boss for 8 years. I remember working a night shift with Jessica and a few others and Harvey showed up unexpectedly to check on us "kids". Of course we weren't working but thought we were safe from the boss lecture since Jessica was with us - nope, she got scolded as well! It became a joke thereafter. I didn't know Geoff and Meredith but I'm sure we passed each other in that long NPL hallway. I have nice memories of Jessica even though it's been many years since I've seen her. Recently I randomly ran into Kaynell, who is a Wheeler family friend and my former co-worker. She was the reconnection with tucked away stories of our crazy young shenanigans. I'm glad to have known Jessica and along the way met some cool people with that connection! Pete Wagner



April 27 at 8:39 AM



Kimberly Fuselier Mendoza posted:

We met Jessica in our neighborhood about five years ago, when she was walking and biking her dogs. We enjoyed visiting with her and soon she gave my family and me many things. During the pandemic, she taught my daughter to care for animals and even to help rescue one. She also taught my son martial arts in our backyard so he had something active to do when everyone was having to stay at home. I enjoyed her friendship and often met with her and a few other ladies in our neighborhood to play games, have tea and wonderful conversation. Jessica was so generous and loving. I am a beginner gardener and she would often bring me little plants to help me on my way. One day, I came home and she had completely composted and mulched one area of my front yard to help me grow fresh herbs for the kitchen. That was just who she was, somebody who would give and give generously and lovingly. She will always be remembered fondly in our family for so many of these reasons and more.

April 27 at 8:39 AM



Geoffrey Wheeler shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

April 29 at 9:42 AM





Media

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Pete Wagner shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

April 27 at 9:21 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jessica by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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