



## Mrs. Janet B. Steck

August 23, 1936 - August 20, 2016

Janet Steck of Homer died August 20 after a courageous two-year battle against cancer. Janet was a dedicated member of the Cortland community, a devoted professional in the arts, and a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. Janet and her husband, Henry Steck, settled in the Cortland-Homer area in 1963.

Janet Steck was born in Lake Forest, Ill., the daughter of Robert and Kathryn Parker Bieger. She attended Lake Forest High School and graduated from Lake Erie College. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) from SUNY Cortland. She also received a Post Graduate Certificate in Museum Management from the Deutsches Museum in Munich, Germany in 1994.

She taught art in the Newfield School District and the Cincinnatus School District. She also served as the director of the Countywide Arts and Crafts Program for the Cortland Youth Bureau.

Janet's true vocation was in the arts. From 1973 to 1984, she was the executive director of the Cortland Arts Council. Her leadership at the Arts Council was characterized by a strong commitment to making the arts accessible to the public, and she promoted outreach to communities and schools throughout Cortland County. Countless students and their teachers were featured in her annual Young Artists exhibitions. In 1978, she served as

the interim director for the MBA in the Arts Program at SUNY Binghamton.

In 1984 Janet was appointed director of the Dowd Fine Arts Gallery at SUNY Cortland, a position she held until her retirement in 2000. Her tenure at the gallery was characterized by an array of exhibitions featuring artists from throughout the United States and abroad. A number of her SUNY Cortland students went on to successful careers as teachers, arts administrators and artists.

From 1988 to 1984, she was a member of the board of directors of the Gallery Association of New York State. From 1988 to 1993, she served as president of the SUNY Gallery and Museum Association. In 1996, she received a grant from the United States Information Agency and the Kress Foundation to work at the King St. Stephen Museum in Székesfehérvár, Hungary.

Throughout her career, Janet was recognized for her excellence as an arts administrator, critical judgment, creative innovations, and the many exhibitions she brought from through the country to Cortland.

Following her retirement, she established her own business, J. Steck & Associates Fine Arts Sales & Services. Janet was often called upon as a consultant and presenter. In 1987, she was the cataloguer/appraiser of the works, held by the artist's estate, of celebrated artist Gerald DiGiusto.

Janet was a contributor to the community in many ways. She served for a number of years as a member of the board of directors of the Cortland YMCA, as well as a board member of Temple Brith Sholom. She was active in local politics, running for the office of trustee in the Village of Homer in the early 2000s; she was a member of the local Democratic Party. Janet was never too busy to volunteer when asked by community groups to help with an event or a fundraiser.

Janet was always ready to help friends and family. A devoted and beloved grandmother, she often provided care for her grandchildren Adam, Sophie and Elijah.

Janet Steck is survived by her husband, Henry Steck; her sons Aron (partner, Rachel Globus) and Stuart; her sister, Carol Kenealy; niece, Wendy Posard; and her grandchildren Adam, Sophie and Elijah Steck.

Calling hours will be held at Riccardi's Funeral Home on Tuesday, August 23 from 4-6:30. Calling hours will conclude with a brief prayer service at 6:30. Internment will be at the Cortland Rural Cemetery on Tompkins Street the following morning, at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to make donations in Janet's name may send contributions to Temple Brith Sholom (117 Madison Street, Cortland, NY 13045), Hospicare & Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County (Ithaca-Cortland) or the Dowd Gallery at SUNY Cortland.

# Tribute Wall

CL

“ I will always remember Janet as a warm and friendly spirit who welcomed me when I joined Temple Brith Sholom years ago. I'll miss her warm smile.

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**Carol Levine** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM

GO

“ Our condolences to you and your family for your loss of Janet.

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**gary osterhoudt** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM

LF

“ Mrs. Janet B. Steck

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**Linda Fumarola** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM

LF

“ Janet and I met on my first day ever teaching at Cincinnatus School. In the teacher's lounge, I introduced myself as the new junior high school math teacher and asked her if she knew who I should ask for the forms to fill out for personal days off for Rosh Hashanuh and she said "You're Jewish!?" And the rest is history. Imagine my coming from Brooklyn to meet my first Temple Brith Sholom friend in Cincinnatus, NY? I will miss our enlightening and loving conversations, her pleasant temperment and her kind nature.

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**Linda Fumarola** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM

JS

“ I can't even find words to express how sad I am at Janet's passing. I treasure a recent memory, of a wonderful dinner with Janet and Henry, while I was in Cortland managing the estate of my own late father. It was the most wonderful and touching gesture, and I am so grateful to their caring for me in my time of difficulty. I'm sending all the love in the world to Stuart and Aron.

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**Jennifer Silas** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM

AG

“ Dear Henry, Aron and Stuart, you are in my thoughts. It was my privilege to have known Janet even though it was likely, at the worst time in her life. She radiated an amazing calm that was infectious. I dearly miss her politely pleasant, almost self effacing demeanor and her way of putting others before self. We had many a conversation and she loved each one if you dearly. I shall miss her friendship. I am glad to have gotten to know you in the process. Do stay in touch. And Henry, please do take good care of yourself.

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**Ajeet Gajra** - May 18, 2018 at 10:55 AM