

Overland Park , KS



Jean Kay Hershey Williams, 73, of Overland Park, Kansas died the morning of March 27, 2021. She was a beloved mother, grandmother, sister, and friend to many.

Jean was born in Topeka, Kansas January 24, 1948. She settled in Holton, Kansas with her parents Harry J. “Pat” Hershey, and Betty Hershey at the age of seven. It was here that she began her career in journalism at Holton High School as the editor of the Holtonian. Pursuit of this career led her to the University of Kansas in 1966. Though she loved her Jayhawks, she was more eager to be an alumnus than a student. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in three and a half years ready to move on to her job secured at the Leavenworth Times after interning there.

It was in Leavenworth that she met Norman C. Williams. The two of them wed in April of 1972 and welcomed their son Patrick Williams near then end of that year. Jean was never one to accept the prevalent idea at the time that a woman could not be a wife, mother, and focused on a career. To prove it could be done she excelled at all three. At the Leavenworth Times she grew through the ranks to become City Desk Editor, then Managing Editor before leaving and accepting a position writing for Special Sections at The Kansas City Star. She went on to become Special Sections Editor at the Star before retiring in 2016.

Jean was always active in her community as well. She was the first woman made a member of the Leavenworth Kansas Rotary Club. She also joined the Unity Church in Leavenworth and served on its board before moving to Overland Park in 1998 where she continued with active involvement. She maintained a spot on the board with the HOA of her condo complex until shortly before her passing.

Jean loved to travel and experience cultures new to her. In retirement she was able to travel the U.S.A. and internationally with many close friends. Her journeys led her to Mexico, Canada, Cuba, Singapore, the U.K., France, and Greece.

Jean was preceded in death by her parents Pat and Betty, and younger brother Joe D. Hershey, all of Holton, Kansas; as well as her husband Norm, of Leavenworth, Kansas.

She is survived by her sisters Susan Hershey of Holton, Kansas; and Linda Shaffer of Cascade, Colorado; as well as her son Patrick, daughter in law Heather, and grandson Nicholas all of Edmond, Oklahoma.

She will be remembered dearly, and missed deeply by many people who had the pleasure of getting to know her throughout her full and adventurous life.

Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m. Thursday, April 1, 2021 at Mercer Funeral Home in Holton, Kansas. Family will greet friends one hour prior to service time. Jean will lie in state at the funeral home Tuesday and Wednesday, March 30 and 31, until 6:00 p.m. Due to current public health conditions face masks are strongly requested by the family. Private Family Burial will be at Leavenworth National Cemetery. Memorials may be given to the Beck-Bookman Library c/o Mercer Funeral Home, P.O. Box 270, Holton, KS. 66436. To leave a special message to the family please visit www.mercerfuneralhomes.com.