



## Janet Elaine "Nicky" Bowhay

October 8, 1956 - July 24, 2024

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Janet "Nicky" Elaine Bowhay who passed away peacefully in Bellingham on July 24, 2024, at the age of 67. She fought a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer.

Janet was born on October 8, 1956, the 5th of 6 children to Everett and Mary Jane Hoffman. Nearly a year to the day after her birth in October of 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial Earth satellite. Her father, who loved to nickname his children, was excited by the news and nicknamed his baby girl Sputnik. As time went by, the silly nickname was shortened to Nicky, and she remained Nicky to her family until her passing. The word Sputnik is Russian for satellite when interpreted in an astronomical context but its more common meanings are spouse or traveling companion. Whether intended or not, the nickname was a perfect fit for Janet's spirit.

Janet was born in Mount Vernon and grew up in Acme, Washington. She was gentle, quiet, and somewhat shy in unfamiliar settings but always quick to smile. Fishing and the outdoors were a part of her life from a very early age. Her family would often go to Lummi Rocks or to Deception Pass to fish for Salmon.

When sister Peg was born, people often mistook the two sisters for twins. Both had very blond hair, cut in a similar style. Along with the third member of

the trio, Susie Q (another dad nickname) they became the Three Musketeers, rarely apart until teens, sharing all the things little girls do. When things got scary at night, the three younger sisters would climb into their oldest sister's bed, and she would read to them from the big red book of fairy tales.

While attending Mount Baker High School in Bellingham, Janet met the love of her life, Thomas Wayne Bowhay. Her brother in law, Steve remembers, "She would come home with Tom every day after school. I would come home and they would be on the couch. Janet would be sitting up and Tom would be laying across her lap watching TV. Janet would be doing their homework with the schoolbooks on his back. I told him that he was spoiled rotten, and he would say, "I know, and she is beautiful too!"

After graduating high school in 1974, they began an adventure together fishing in Kodiak, Alaska with the Bowhay family. They wed in 1976. Soon after came their first son Adam, born in 1977, and Justin, born in 1979. Janet's mothering nature kicked in immediately. She put her foot down and informed Tom he needed a safer, more family friendly occupation. Tom agreed and started brokering seafood with his brother Ken. After Tom started his own successful business, they eventually settled in Woodinville on 10 acres and built their dream country home where Janet enjoyed picking berries for jams and decorating the home with antiques.

Her hobbies included antiquing, crocheting, watching her boys play sports, and all things eBay when Tom and her owned Cubbyhole Antiques along with Winona and Ronald Bowhay in Snohomish. Janet and Tom traveled the country in their RV, picking up antiques along the way to add to their ever-growing collection and shop. She had a brain for trivia and loved playing the Trivial Pursuit board game at family gatherings. She even tried out for the gameshow "Jeopardy!" during one of her many trips to southern California. An avid reader, Janet has read every Jane Austen romance type novel there

ever was. She enjoyed life but chose to remain in the background and avoided being out in front. If asked, she would tell you whatever Tom or other family members were doing is what she wanted to do, not needing anything more than to be surrounded by Tom and her boys. Janet shined when caring for others, especially family members. She devoted her life to making sure her husband and two boys had the best lives possible. She was always more interested in celebrating the achievements of others rather than her own.

When Tom was diagnosed with ALS in 2009, Janet and family jumped into the caregiving role and provided excellent in-home care until his passing March 28, 2011. The ordeal took a toll on Janet's physical and emotional health from which she never fully recovered. After Tom's passing, she returned to her hometown of Bellingham for her remaining years surrounded by family. Janet enjoyed spoiling her sons, their wives, grandchildren and kitties every chance she could. She had a brain for trivial pursuit and made epic potato salad and chocolate chip cookies.

Janet is preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Bowhay, her parents Everett and Mary Jane Hoffman, her father-in-law Ronald Eugene Bowhay, sister in law Cindy Bowhay and nephew James Sanderson. She is no doubt happy to see them again.

Janet is survived by her two sons, Adam and Justin Bowhay and their wives Allison and Amy; along with her grandchildren Sofia, Wyatt, Sawyer and Henry; her mother in law Winona Bowhay; siblings Linda Headlee along with husband Jack, Ray Hoffman and wife Pat, brother Robert, Carol and husband Jerry, and Margaret Bruner and husband Elliot; brothers in law Ken Bowhay, Dan and Heather Bowhay, Dave and Sherry Bowhay, Steve Bowhay and 24 loving nieces and nephews.

Please share your thoughts and memories of Janet in the online memorial guest book to the left of the page.

We invite all who knew Janet to join us in remembering the warm and generous woman she was. Her graveside service will be held at Bayview Cemetery at 1420 Woburn Street in Bellingham on August 6th at 2:00PM.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *A loving, warm and kind soul, Janet will be missed by anyone she touched. My sincerest condolences to her boys and entire family. Reunited with her true love Tom in Heaven.*

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**BOBBIE HARDER** - August 02, 2024 at 12:00 AM