



Laurel Elizabeth Hicks

May 29, 1946 - February 3, 2026

Laurel Elizabeth Hicks, a longtime book author and editor and a beloved friend to people from many countries, died February 3, 2026, from complications of atypical pneumonia. She was 79.

“At 2:47 this morning, Laurel Elizabeth Hicks transitioned to her next life,” Laurel’s younger sister Barbara Hicks wrote. “I was privileged to be with her, as hard as it was. I sat with her, held her hand, told her she was much loved and that I would make sure her kitties were taken care of and I would do everything I could to settle her affairs. Then I started humming, in my cracked old voice, and realized as she drew her last few peaceful breaths the tune was that old spiritual Kumbaya. ‘Come by here, my Lord.... O Lord, come by here....’

“I am so very sad for all of us, and so very happy she died the way she wanted to, peacefully, and with the assurance she was going to a better place.”

Laurel was born on May 29, 1946, in Richmond, California, and soon moved with her family to Washington state, first to a farm near Salkum, then to Puyallup, and in 1952 to Ferndale, where she attended public school and excelled academically before attending Western Baptist Bible College, in California, from which she graduated in 1968.

She then moved to Pensacola, Florida, to teach at Pensacola Christian Academy and soon to write and edit K-12 textbooks for its affiliated Pensacola Christian College's publishing house, A Beka Book (now Abeka Book, LLC). Laurel spent most of her professional career at A Beka, where she wrote and edited books on history, geography, and reading. She was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters degree by Pensacola Christian College in 2002, and was a primary figure in the development of the A Beka curriculum, which is widely used in homeschooling and private Christian schools. She is regarded as a founding architect of modern Christian curriculum.

Laurel spent most of her life dealing with the aftereffects of polio, which she contracted at age 2. The disease most profoundly affected her legs, on which she wore full-length braces. For many years she used a motorized wheelchair for mobility. Despite her physical limitations she lived a life of grace, courage, wit, learning, and profound faith. She loved opera and classic literature, especially poetry, from the Bible and the Greeks to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, T.S. Eliot, Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and many more. And she very much enjoyed the flavor of a good chocolate.

In 1999 she moved back to her hometown of Ferndale, where she lived until her death. In Ferndale she reconnected with many old friends and resumed her close relationship with the town's First Baptist Church, where she found satisfying companionship and a spiritual home. She also maintained her friendships in Florida and kept in contact with friends from around the globe, including a large group of Laurels from many countries who kept in touch with one another.

"We lost a beautiful soul and I'm truly grateful to have known you," one of those Laurels, Laurel Wilson of Johannesburg, South Africa, said on Facebook. "You always had the kindest words to share with me and all the

Laurels and I'm going to miss that and all your fur baby pics (always made me smile). It's rare to find someone who is so genuine, kind and so caring for everyone in her life.”

Another longtime friend, Eric Hurst, commented: “Miss Hicks was my first-grade teacher, and I was blessed that she was still in my life! We had been connected on Facebook about as long as we'd both had Facebook. She could always be counted on for an encouraging word or a witty comment.”

Laurel was predeceased by her parents, Irby Hicks and Charlotte Baldwin Hicks; her older sister Melinda Hicks Lee; her younger brother Bill Hicks, and her nephew Peter Hicks. She is survived by her siblings Bob Hicks, Barbara Jean Hicks, Charles Hicks, and John Hicks; her nieces Bekah Hicks, Melissa Doll, Alicia Gudgel, Kelli Jo Harrell, and Sarah Kremen-Hicks; her nephews Aaron Hicks, Bud Lee, Jesse Hicks, Manuel Hicks, and Joshua Hicks; her sisters-in-law Laura Grimes and Kathi Hicks; cousins including Kathe Kiehn, Carol Kiehn, Ann LeBaron Wilson, and Cathy Osborne; and her beloved cats Chrissy and Pushkin.

A memorial service is scheduled for March 28 at 2 pm at the First Baptist Church in Ferndale.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 28. 2:00 PM (PT)

First Baptist Church
5759 Vista Dr
Ferndale, WA 98248

Tribute Wall



“ *I am honored to have been quoted in the obituary for this dear lady, my lifelong teacher and friend! Blessings and peace to you all.*

Eric Hurst - February 22 at 07:35 AM



“ *Vincent H. A. Gordon, Jr., Ph.D. lit a candle in memory of Laurel Hicks*



Vincent H. A. Gordon, Jr., Ph.D. - February 22 at 06:54 AM