



## Jan Thayer

June 18, 1937 - May 3, 2014

Janice Marie Thayer, of Grand Island, died at her home on May 3, 2014, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was age 76.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Thursday at Peace Lutheran Church in Grand Island. Reverends Terry Brandenburg and Michael Reiners will officiate.

Private family burial will be in the Grand Island City Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Wednesday at All Faiths Funeral Home in Grand Island.

Jan was born to Alfred and Evelyn Larson and raised on a farm near Wolbach, Nebraska, which was homesteaded by her Swedish grandparents in 1890.

She graduated from Wolbach High School at age 16, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at age 20.

Jan married Ernie Thayer in 1957, and they raised their family in Grand Island. She worked as a clinical dietician at St. Francis Hospital, had a ten-year radio show on KRGI entitled, "Food for Thought," founded her own dietetic consulting firm, and had a television show on Channels 10/11 entitled, "Take Five."

In 1979, Jan became co-owner of Wedgewood Nursing Home and devoted her career to the support and health care of the elderly. In 1988, she developed and was Executive Director of Riverside Lodge Retirement Community in Grand Island. In 1990, she founded and was CEO of Excel

Development Group, which developed, managed, and owned retirement facilities in three states with more than 400 employees.

She also served on multiple corporate and community boards, including the American Health Care Association, the National Center for Assisted Living, the Foundation for the Future of Aging, Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, US West – Nebraska, the Nebraska Health Care Association, College Park, and the Weil Institute of Critical Care in Rancho Mirage, California. She was Vice-Chair of the Nebraska Republican Party and an elected delegate to the National Republican Convention in 1988. She was a life-long active member of her church.

Her career has been recognized with awards ranging from induction into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame in 2005, to the American Health Care Association's "Chairman's Award" in 2011, which is its highest national honor. She was named Grand Island Independent "Woman of the Year" in 1988; University of Nebraska "Businesswoman of the Year" in 1990, and "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 1992. Riverside Lodge received the American Health Care Association's "National Quality Award" in 2011.

In 2013, Jan and Ernie were inducted into the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame upon receiving the Clarence Swanson Award. The ribbon cutting of the "Thayer Family Patient Waiting Area" at the Buffett Cancer Center at UNMC will occur in 2016. Jan was able to cut the ribbon in August, 2013, for the Thayer Family Brain Research Lab, which is dedicated to the research of concussions and is located in the east stadium of Memorial Stadium in Lincoln.

Jan is survived by her husband, Ernie, and three sons, David Thayer of Dallas, Texas; Dan and Lisa Thayer of Grand Island; and DJ and Janet Thayer of Omaha; a sister, Sharon Rosander of Wolbach, Nebraska; and

grandchildren Emily and Carolyn Thayer of Grand Island; and Emma and Will Thayer of Omaha, together with many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Alfred and Evelyn Larson.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Central Nebraska Humane Society or Peace Lutheran Church of Grand Island.

# Cemetery Details

## Grand Island City Cemetery

Grand Island, NE

# Previous Events

## Service

MAY 8. 1:00 PM (CT)

Peace Lutheran  
1710 N. North Rd  
Grand Island, NE 68803

# Tribute Wall



“ *Jan Thayer*

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October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *Jan always brings back fond memories to me at a time when she was a member of the NHCA Board of Directors and I was a staff member at NHCA in the 1980's. I learned so much from Jan, not only about long term care, but also how to lead with style. When I left NHCA, Jan and colleague Beryl Boerner gave me a white wicker picnic basket which I use to this day. She will never be forgotten. To Jan's family, I send my heartfelt sympathy at this very difficult time. May her memory bring you peace.*

*Delight Wreed Byrd*

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**Delight Wreed Byrd** - May 08, 2014 at 08:38 PM



“ *Ernie and family, sorry for you loss. Mrs. Thayer was a visionary in the Assisted Living and long term care arena. I worked for Mrs. Thayer has a young kid while in high school and looked to her has a mentor. I then became a Administrator of a long term care facility. Watching Mrs. Thayer throughout my career I would like to think that I have picked up a lesson or two on how to treat employees and most importantly how to treat the Residents we have the privilege to serve. I believe Mrs. Thayer was a leader even before leadership was a management style.*

*Bob Tank*

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**Bob Tank** - May 07, 2014 at 07:41 PM

DM

“ *Jan was a mentor and a friend - she made everyone around her feel valued. I will miss her elegant style, good advice and great compassion. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with all of her family (who were truly the most important people in her life) - Dianne De La Mare (AHCA staffer)*

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**Dianne De La Mare** - May 07, 2014 at 04:49 PM

NN

“ *IN MERORY OF JAN THAYER*

*What an accomplished woman. I had an honor to be interviewed by Mrs. Jan Thayer for her television show in 1982 in Grand Island, Nebraska. She came to interview the boat owner family, the first Vietnamese boat refugee family arrived to this small Midwest town. Because I was staying temporary with Mr. and Mrs. Đ?ng T?n at this time and the only person could talk in English, Mrs. Jan Thayer ended up interviewing me as a family translator. She quickly learned about my watercolor paintings and I became the focus of her interview. She asked me about our boat journey and has her cameraman filmed several of my paintings to use later in the TV program. At the end of the interview, she offered to purchase about 6 to 8 of my best watercolors at \$135 a piece. At the time, I was thrilled and accepted her offer on the spot. A year later, in 1983, she helped put together my artwork for a display at a local bank. Yet more than 32 years later, I could still remember her friendly face, warm smile and gentle voice. I feel blessed having met Jan. Thank you Mrs. Jan Thayer for touching my life and may you rest in peace. --- Nam Nguyen, Sacramento, California.*

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**Nam Nguyen** - May 07, 2014 at 01:04 PM

PG

“ Jan was simply amazing. Her passion for the elderly, her integrity, her energy, her love of life, her love of people, her love of her family....the list goes on. I remember meeting Jan in Las Vegas for the AHCA/NCAL convention a few years ago. She asked if I wanted to go to a bar and watch the Nebraska football game with her, since we had the rest of Saturday open. I said sure, secretly thinking that at a sports bar, I could watch my Notre Dame Irish at the same time. Little did I know that Jan was taking me to a sports bar overrun by Nebraska fans and their fan club. Every TV in the place, and there must have been 28, was tuned to the Nebraska game. So, of course, I bought a red t-shirt and cheered on the Cornhuskers. Jan's passion was infectious. She made those around her aspire to a higher level. She was my teacher, my mentor, my friend My life is richer because Jan was a part of it. It is sadder today because she's gone. But her spirit will be with us always. Thank you, Jan. May you sing with the angels in paradise.

Pat Giorgio

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Patricia Giorgio - May 07, 2014 at 10:43 AM

BC

“ I had the extreme privilege of working for Jan at Excel Development Group. Her honesty, integrity and genuine concern for people made her a step above everybody else. I remember one of my first staff meetings she said to me, "Bill, if you can't do it right, just don't do it!" I have the utmost respect for her and she has made a very positive impact on my life. She will be missed by all who knew her.

May you, Ernie, and the Thayer family receive the peace and comfort that our Father in Heaven freely gives to those who ask.  
God Bless you!

Bill Caton

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Bill Caton - May 06, 2014 at 05:17 PM

KM

“ *Karla M. purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Jan Thayer.*



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**Karla M.** - May 06, 2014 at 03:42 PM

KV

“ *Jan touched so many lives. Her memory will stay with each of us because her ability to make us each feel very special. Jan was my mentor. She hired me to manage Eaglecrest knowing she would have to spend many hours with training and support which she did. She was such an amazing woman. I have been blessed to be part of her life.*



*Eaglecrest Retirement Community will be planting a tree at Eaglecrest in Jan's memory. We will select a tree that will be strong and elegant just like Jan.*

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**Karen Vidricksen** - May 06, 2014 at 01:58 PM

JD

“ *I had the pleasure of working with Jan as a board member of the Foundation for the Future of Aging. Tirelessly committed and dedicated to her core beliefs is what impressed me constantly about Jan. I also learned quickly that Jan knew Jesus as her Savior and she had expressed that this gave her strength in her battles. This last battle was actually her transition to the peace that she knew awaited her. My prayers for peace to her family. Jan, you are missed.*

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**Jim Dwyer** - May 06, 2014 at 01:02 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jan Thayer.*



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May 06, 2014 at 10:32 AM



“ *Jan was the most amazing person I have ever met. She was the one person I could never say no to. Hans Christian Anderson said that "A human life is a story told by God." This is certainly true of Jan. You will always be in our thoughts and our hearts. Our prayers go out to your family during this difficult time.*

*Chris Mason*

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**Christian Mason** - May 06, 2014 at 10:21 AM



“ *Jan was the true definition of the word "Lady". She was inspirational and supportive to all her female colleagues and her strength in facing the last two years has been nothing short of miraculous. I will carry her memory with me for years to come.*

*My heartfelt sympathy to her family on their devastating loss.*

*Gail Clarkson*

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**Gail Clarkson** - May 06, 2014 at 10:13 AM

LB

“*Jan, Was an inspiration to women who have dedicated their lives to caring for the elderly. She tirelessly gave of her time to AHCA/NCAL to improve and enhance our knowledge and the quality we strive to provide our residents. She was always so elegant and will be missed. I feel blessed to have known her. My thoughts and prayers go out to her family. Liz Blankenship, Arkansas*

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**Liz Blankenship** - May 06, 2014 at 07:17 AM

FO

“*Ernie and family. Thinking of all of you. Jan was an amazing woman. She will be missed.*

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**Francie (Rasmussen) Ostermeier** - May 05, 2014 at 07:22 PM

NM

“*Jan was the most elegant and talented woman i have ever met. She was a mentor to me and was an example of a great business woman, leader, and friend. She will be missed terribly. My love and thoughts and prayers to her family. The world has lost a remarkable woman.*



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**Nicolette Merino** - May 05, 2014 at 06:30 PM