



Janice A. Yager

October 9, 1951 - August 14, 2024

Jan Yager, born in Detroit, MI and longtime resident of Philadelphia, PA, passed away on August 14, 2024 at the age of 72, after a 12 year battle with metastatic breast cancer. Jan was predeceased by her husband Rick Shnitzler, and her parents Mary Linda (Parrish) Yager and Casper Yager Jr. She is survived by her daughter Julia Yager (Michael Aboff). She is also survived by her sister Karen (Yager) Galvin (Timothy Galvin Sr.) and her brother Robert Yager.

"One day when I was 10 my next door neighbor Anna, who was an artist, called me to the fence to see what I was drawing. She asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. Without hesitation I replied "I want to be an artist". With discernable emotion she pointed at me and said "You better be really sure, because once you start you will never be able to quit." About a decade later in my college dorm room her words came back to me and I finally understood what she meant." -- Jan Yager

Jan received a BFA in jewelry and metalsmithing from Western Michigan University in 1974 and an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 1981. She moved to Philadelphia in 1983 and established a studio, which she held for 35 years, at the oldest and largest artist building in Philadelphia, 915 Spring Garden Street.

Over the span of her career she had many notable achievements including being featured in Craft in America on PBS, and receiving grants from foundations such as the PEW Fellowship in the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Anonymous was a Woman Foundation, and the Rhode Island State Arts Council.

In the early 1990's, she took a two-year self-funded sabbatical to research the history and philosophy of jewelry and jewelry making - which she felt was often overlooked by artists in the fine arts. Her goal became the creation of work that was "rooted in history, yet undeniably of its place and time." This led her to pivot away from the production jewelry that supported her early success and into developing the City Flora/City Flotsam series based on plants and discarded items found on the sidewalks near her studio.

At the conclusion of a lecture she gave in St. Louis, MO she was offered a solo show at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London, UK in 2001: Jan Yager: City Flora/City Flotsam. Her Invasive Species: American Tiara made for the solo show was also exhibited in a 2002 V&A show: Tiaras.

Today her jewelry can be found in the permanent collections of institutions including:

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

The National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, UK

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC, USA

Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York, USA

There are no plans for a formal gathering. In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Jan's name to support Craft in America at <https://www.craftinamerica>.

org/.

Tribute Wall

SP

“ 7 files added to the album Jan's petunias



Sue Patterson - November 03, 2024 at 02:26 PM

SF

“ I first met Jan as one of my patrons at the Central library and when I moved in across the street, she took me under her loving wings and made me welcome. Jan was the best neighbor and simply, the best human being. She was kind and thoughtful, and get company. We spent many wonderful times together, celebrating holidays, good dinners, (at her house) and (movies at mine.) I cherish her friendship and memory. She and Rick we rethe glue that held our neighborhood together. I will always admire their intellect and kindness, and the courage it took to stay in the city and raise their beloved daughter Julia here. Jan was a gifted artist who was an an amazing advocate for Philadelphia's art community. She will be missed by many people and each of who knew her will always be grateful for her friendship. She wa a favorite of my cat Joey, as wellas as, the of the humans in our neighborhood. Rest in peace, love, and beauty. Always in my heart.

SANDIE FARRELL - September 29, 2024 at 10:26 AM

SN

“ Jan is kind, nurturing, creative, observant and curious. We met Jan and Rick 11 years ago when I was a new mother and a full-time international student in Philly. With all of my family being overseas, we got invited to Jan and Rick's house when my first child was only a few weeks old. Since then, Jan, Rick and Julia became our family in Philadelphia. .

Like everyone else has shared here, Jan is a great listener and counselor. She taught me to feed my baby with healthy foods, treat all the creatures on the earth with respect, introduced many American traditions to us such as the tooth fairy and Easter Bunny, and showed great patience with me and my family when we spoke broken English to her.

Jan is a loving wife, mother, and aunt! I remember she put her nephew's childhood drawing on the wall during a holiday dinner. Jan said children are the best gifts in life. She shared when her great grandmother immigrated to the US from Europe, great grandmother didn't have much but her children, and yet she said "I am rich" while looking at all the children in her empty house.

She also taught me to not give kids too many candies when Halloween comes. She showed me a photo of Julia when she was about 3 years old, with a big smile on her face and sitting next to a huge pumpkin. "Isn't that smile more precious than candies and Trick-or-treating?" Jan said. Jan and Rick took us to parks where they used to take Julia to when she was a baby. Jan was so happy when she found out about Julia and Michael getting married!

Jan is so fun and full of wonderful ideas! She gave us so many helpful gifts, from gardening and weeding tools, snow shovels, snow brush and ice scraper (when we got our first car), a very good serrated knife for slicing tomatoes, towels, to handmade sushi plates and wall arts! She was also so good at finding puzzles, stickers, and toys for my children too!

One day in the middle of the pandemic, when we all cooped up in the house all day long with kids taking online classes. We received the Red Envelopes (hóngbāo) from Jan around the Lunar New Year time. My kids were thrilled to receive the special hóngbāo, because Jan colored the regular envelopes all over using red markers, and she put cash in them!

Jan, thank you for making the world a better place. Thank you for being such a special person in my life!

Snow with Guoli, Leo and Daniel

Snow - September 11, 2024 at 11:50 PM

PH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Peggy Hart - August 27, 2024 at 06:26 AM

AB

“ Andrea Beizer

We met at our studio building, 915. I moved into the studio across the hall from her on the second floor. Jan and I had many great conversations about art, and life in general. Some of our greatest memories were our many Friday night dinners we shared, which we did weekly prior to her becoming too sick. Our favorite restaurant was a chinese restaurant down the street from Jan's house. Jan also got me involved in applying for several grants, and told me about the lecture Tony Auth (Pulitzer Prize Editorial Cartoonist for the Philadelphia Inquirer) was giving at the Philadelphia Library. We both went to his lecture, which gave me a chance to reconnect with Tony Auth. He encouraged my cartooning, and the rebirth of "Alice", from the 1980's to 2014. Unfortunately he passed away in 2014. Jan was always full of ideas and how to make things better, she always had great suggestions for me in regards to "Alice". It was great to know a person who was a very successful artist and who gave great advise and encouragement in my development as an artist and a cartoonist. Over these last 20 years, I have considered her to be one of my very best friends and truly miss her kind, thoughtful and very wise demeanor. With lots of love towards Julia, Michael and the rest of her family. Andrea Beizer

Andrea Beizer - August 26, 2024 at 09:48 PM

SO

“ *Jan was a good friend. I wish I had known her earlier, but I never really knew her until she and I among neighbors attended a funeral at the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul on Logan Circle.*

Afterwards, many of us together walked back up the hill to our Callowhill houses. Jan and I broke off from the group; stopped in the Matthias Baldwin Park; sat on a bench and talked. She agreed to go to my funeral, I to hers. Unspoken was the fact that one of us would not carry out her promise.

Jan I am here. I bear witness to you. You are in my heart. You were wise, kind, loyal, generous, smart, interesting with a good sense of humor and loads of artistic talent.

With much love, Sandy Owens

Sandra Owens - August 25, 2024 at 11:03 AM

DH

“ Over 45 maybe even 50 years now I was perusing a book of another student's in jewelry class. I came across a sweet series of jewelry pieces that I instantly fell in love with. It was called the Whomp & Puff series. Tiny little pillows of sterling, brass & copper. I wondered out loud in class how did the artist form these lovely puffs of cuteness without ruining the textures. A fellow classmate informed me the artist used a hydraulic press that she had made herself using a bottle jack. I was gobsmacked. I'd never heard of such a thing. Later taking post graduate courses I received the same rudimentary plans the artist used & my dad built it for me down at the ship yard in Chester Pa . I never did get it working. (The holes drilled in the 1" steel plates didn't line up perfectly.) Years later I was strolling the great Smithsonian Craft Show casually targeting the smiths. One jeweler caught my eye. I paused stared couldn't believe my eyes looked up & saw a lovely woman walking my way. I said breathlessly ,”Oh my, you did the Whomp & Puff Series. She stopped in her tracks & asked. “How do you know about that series” I replied,”I studied you in college” We had a short convo. Even though her work at the time was beyond my means I sucked it up & bought a lovely pin. I treasured it all these years. I had several calls with Jan over the years about the nature of art jewelry. I followed her progress religiously. This year I finally attained a Potter USA hydraulic press. I literally set it up this week & started using it. I've ravenously been producing bits & pieces with it learning its idiosyncratic ways. Then this morning I woke up to the news Jan had died of the same disease I successfully fought off. My heart is broken. Another mentor lost. She was epically talented & creative. It's a huge personal loss. But the world lost a real creative. She's not to be replaced easily.
Rip Jan Yager

Di-Ann Hand - August 25, 2024 at 05:56 AM

JN

“ *Julia and Karen,
I am deeply sorry for Jan’s passing. The world has lost a remarkable woman.*

Jan and I first met as 17-year-olds in 1969 at Western Michigan University where we were assigned as roommates. Despite our different backgrounds, we had a lot in common - we shared the same name, had birthdays close to each other, and both pursued art majors. Jan's talent in art was evident from the start, as her sketchbooks were filled with beautiful line drawings of natural objects. She was always willing to offer artistic advice as we navigated through the art department. Jan was never afraid to question the "why" of an assignment and what we could learn from it. Beyond her art, I admired her kind heart and intellectual insights on various subjects. We faced challenges and had wonderful adventures together. Jan had a strong interest in diverse cultures and had friends from all over the world.

Although our paths diverged for a while, we reconnected about six years ago. I had the opportunity to visit Philadelphia and stay with your mom and dad several times. Our friendship felt as strong as ever as if we had never lost touch. We had meaningful conversations on a wide range of topics, from politics to genealogy, often resulting in long phone calls. I will miss her dearly.

Jan Buttermore Nagel

Janet Nagel - August 21, 2024 at 04:14 PM

“ I send my deep condolences to Julia and Michael, their extended families, and Jan’s numerous friends and acquaintances. I send my gratitude, too, to Julia and Michael for the wonderful celebration page that is connecting us all in our sorrow. It helps- and I am inspired by all your loving comments to add mine as well.

Jan will continue to live in my heart because of her artistic proficiency, her humanity, and her personal support. As with others, she offered me caring advice backed by years of experiences in building her ever-evolving artistic career. She connected many of us during her life, and, I hope, will continue to connect us now and in the future. Her work will surely outlive all of us and live on in perpetuity!

I’m not sure when I first became aware of Jan’s work, but I met her jewelry before I met her! In 1990 our pieces shared a vitrine in a juried 1990 exhibition in Philadelphia, and shortly thereafter I met her at a craft history conference in New York. After I moved into a studio at 915 Spring Garden St., I was delighted to see her coming down the hall and learned she had a studio just doors from me. From the very beginning I loved her calm presence and sense of humor.

Through hard work, determination, creativity, and skill, Jan admirably made a living making and selling her jewelry. It’s a difficult path. Early on in her career she developed a way to produce her unique work efficiently. She is one of the first, or maybe the first craft artist, to use the industrial hydraulic press to make metal forms, sometimes with stamped textures, that she soldered together for sculptural components in her jewelry. She also had a machine that made an unusual kind of chain on which she attached and spaced real stones among her puffy forms. With time she pursued pieces based more specifically on interests found in our studio “backyard,” such as chicory flowers or crack vials. She ultimately pushed beyond her exploration of our neighborhood to pursue broader interests of “material culture,” such as her work referencing

a Lenape Indian wampum belt and European tiara.

She had success at all phases of her artistic life from participation in the Philadelphia Craft Show to her exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Despite moments of discouragement over early prejudice against Craft or a difficulty of making a living solely from her work, she persevered in producing singular pieces that helped transition the craft field from the cultural idea of jewelry as ornament to its contemporary value as art.

In building her life as an artist Jan possessed a natural business acumen that complemented her commitment at the bench. She also cared about the past and future of the field, attending conferences and symposiums and online events. She shared her ideas through exhibitions, lectures, and conversations. She valued many jewelers, especially those who mentored her, and some of whom she interviewed for the National Archives. Inquisitive and open, she developed many lifelong relationships, both professionally and personally.

Jan and I shared an interest in Craft and we valued our Midwestern roots. I am grateful for her friendship, for her unconditional support of my work, for her laughter, and for her warm willingness to share her personally meaningful and artistic life. I will always delight in her accomplishments, her love and devotion to her husband and daughter, her ethical core, and her abundant kindness and generosity.

I am so saddened by her death, but this feels wonderful to share my love for Jan and to feel your love as well. May Jan rest in peace and may we all celebrate her in perpetuity!

Marian Pritchard

Marian Pritchard - August 21, 2024 at 11:10 AM

EB

“ *It was my pleasure to interview Jan for inclusion in my book on contemporary American jewelers. She was an original voice in a dynamic moment of American jewelry design. Ettagale Blauer*

Ettagale Blauer - August 20, 2024 at 05:05 PM

BQ

“ *I had the greatest privilege of having Jan as my neighbor for over 40 years. I was in awe of how she took a dirt city lot between our homes and turn it into one of the most magnificent butterfly gardens in the City. She toiled in that garden every day. No one passed by without complimenting Jan on the beauty. Of course Jan was always generous with her bouquets of flowers that she would give to complete strangers. My house was the recipient of many of those beautiful bouquets. What I loved most was the afternoons on the front steps just talking about life. I can still see that smile when she told me Julia and Michael were getting married. Her greatest creation bloomed into an amazing woman. Life's circumstances change in a flash and I moved into the condo across the street. No longer did I have to leave my house to gaze upon the garden now I just look out the window and look down on it. Julia and Michael, the impact of your loss is unspeakable but know Jan touched so many of us in ways she will never be forgotten.*

Betsy Quigley - August 20, 2024 at 03:55 PM

ST

“ My condolences to everyone in Jan’s family. Her passing is a profound loss.

I met Jan 40 years ago when we were both recent MFA grads. Our studios were across the hall at 915 Spring Garden St. I began to kindle a friendship after hearing Patsy Cline wafting from her studio. It took very little time to find out that this woman across the hall was a force.

Each of us worked long hours at night. A knock on a door often led to a much-needed break for both of us. We would end up talking about life, our families, our goals, and our dreams. We soon became best buds. One of my most fond memories of that time in the late 1980s is, with barely a dollar in our pockets, we would splurge and go dancing until two in the morning at a reggae bar on South Street.

Life progressed, dreams brought successes and both of us found someone to love.

Those late-night talks soon changed into very long lunches at the Paradise Diner. In those conversations, while eating the daily special, it was always clear Jan had a north star of mid-western honesty, rarely pulled a punch, and saw through most bullshit. As a friend, she kept me in check. As an artist, she helped me hone my craft.

She married Rick and soon, her greatest creation, Julia was born. Jan juggled being a loving wife and mother, an artist, and a businesswoman while tirelessly making jewelry and gaining increased respect in her field. When my partner died in 1995 I will be forever grateful as her love and counsel helped me pick up the pieces and keep moving on.

Few people know how quietly she helped others. When she was awarded many well-deserved grants she believed in tithing, and

would purchase the work of other artists to help support them or at times just give money outright to those who were in need.

Jan was introspective and smart. Always tenacious and curious, she questioned the prevailing trends and was willing to take the time to figure things out her way. A lover of history, she was a keen observer and an intuitive but rational thinker.

I was honored to help design her exhibition at the V&A in 2001 where her work just sparkled! While we were in the middle of installing the show there was a rumor that Queen Elizabeth was in the building. All of a sudden the staff rushed us up a back staircase to a private balcony to watch her Highness enter. I looked at Jan with such happiness that she was achieving so many of her dreams.

Of course, our relationship had bumps in the road, as all deep long-term friendships do, but true love heals and outweighs those troubles. We were always sorry we just wasted time fretting about crap that in the end doesn't matter.

One could never remember Jan and not also remember she was tough—but never mean. She had that toughness of spirit needed to survive an art world that takes no prisoners. No matter what, however, she always championed the artist over the system.

That toughness showed even more resilience when she was diagnosed with cancer. We shared many laughs and tears over the next 12 years as she entered semi-retirement and kept fighting.

It was such a joy last summer to watch Jan see Julia and Michael get married and to witness yet again another one of her dreams come true.

So Jan—

I will miss our talks about the dreams for the future, but mostly I will just miss you.

Steve Tucker - August 20, 2024 at 11:22 AM

AK

Beautifully written. I appreciate how well you captured how extraordinary a human she was.

Amy Kann - August 20, 2024 at 02:36 PM

SG

“*There's an immense void here in the physical world with the passing of both Jan and Rick, but their energy resonates stronger than ever. Not only are they family, but they're thoughtful and caring teachers that have helped shape the person I am today. Your impact on my life can't be properly put into words. It's a loving energy that will forever live in my heart. You and uncle Rick always challenged Tim and I to try new things (foods, cultural experiences), and to connect with others, especially those most different from ourselves who we can learn from and vice versa. As a young teen, you talked my parents into letting me get an earring and to let me buy cassettes with parental advisories, saying, "War is the only thing that I think is offensive." You helped to foster my creativity and challenged me to question systems and ways of being. My "big city" east coast aunt and uncle's presence has been so potent in my life and I'm grateful to have had the years we spent together. Love you so much. Thank you for everything.*

Sean Galvin - August 19, 2024 at 04:19 PM

MF

“ Frank and I lived next door to Jan and Rick for over twenty years. We had many happy conversations over the back fence between our houses. Jan nurtured nature in the form of beautiful flowers and plants in her yard as well as befriending a robin which used to come by for raisins every afternoon. Once when she was going to be away, she asked me to look out for her feathered friend. Sure enough, the robin showed up behind our house and waited until I provided raisins in Jan’s absence.

Jan was a wonderful friend and neighbor. She and Rick really knew how to foster community spirit. One of my favorite parties was one which Jan and I hosted together for all the neighbors on 20th Street. She always kept the “near neighbors” list up to date so help was only a phone call away.

Her incredible artistic creations are another story altogether. I was always in awe of her ability to make something exquisite while incorporating a statement about society or the edginess of the city. I knew she had pieces in the permanent collections of many museums but I didn’t know about Edinburgh. I wish I had known because we were there this year. Hmm, now perhaps we need to go back!

Mary Feingold - August 19, 2024 at 03:02 PM

J(

“*Jan’s perpetual smile always shone upon us. Although only 5 years older than her she was my little niece. We grew up as kids in those early years on Detroit’s east side. I can still picture us playing cowboys and Indians in her parents tiny living room with her brother Bob and big sister Karen. Jan always had to be “rescued.” In time her family moved away and so did mine. We both grew up and moved further away. At some point, life took over as it so often does. But we kept in touch with family reunions, phone calls and letters. We loved following her career and remain so proud of her. I guarantee you that St. Peter greeted her with one of her tiaras on his head and a double thumbs up. Jan has now moved on to parts not totally explainable to us but totally explainable to her. It’s not easy for us left behind to accept that she is gone. But she will continue to linger in the lives of those she loved and they in hers. God bless you my forever niece. Your song has ended but your melody lingers on. Uncle Johnny along with my wife Aunt Lynda*

John Yager (uncle) - August 19, 2024 at 02:38 PM

PD

“*Claudia and I are very sorry to hear of Jan's passing and will certainly miss her and Rick. We were casual friends but had dinner at their home a number of times over the years. More recently, we ran into her at the Thursday farmers market on Fairmount Avenue. We knew that Jan was a jewelry maker, but didn't know how prominent she was! We'll both miss Jan and Rick, and they will remain in our prayers. Claudia Crane and Paul Droesch*

Paul Droesch - August 18, 2024 at 11:19 PM



“ Wonderful to read the story of Jan’s childhood desire to be an artist followed by the many artistic achievements. She was an artist in her soul and had a wonderful curiosity. I always admired her talent for taking the findings of her inquiries and thoughtfully translating them into her art. That curiosity and consideration was present in every conversation we ever had over the 30 years since I married into the family. She will be missed. - Brian DeCubellis

Brian DeCubellis - August 18, 2024 at 09:26 PM



“ She crafted my favorite Xmas ornaments.

She had the original Macintosh computer. (She was an influencer before influencers.)

She bought me a plane ticket to Philly for my 12th. birthday. (This changed my life.)

*She hand delivered my wife’s engagement ring in a mint tin to me in London, UK.
(This changed my life again.)*

She made Philly a second home for us.

She was an incredible talent.

She taught me so much.

She was my Aunt Jan.

And I have a hole in my heart.

Timmy Galvin - August 18, 2024 at 09:25 PM

AK

“ Jan and I were both in the arts building from the beginning -about 33 years. I moved around a lot within the second floor and for those last ten years her studio was next door to mine. We would have lunch together with Marian and laugh and talk about art too. Jan was one of the most articulate artists I’ve ever known. She was brilliant, her work was brilliant and she was generous in so many ways. She put me up for the anonymous was a woman grant because she knew I was struggling financially. She gave me wonderful tools that she was ready to pass on even though she could have sold them. She was kind and thoughtful and tough too when it came to her art. She tried valiantly for years to get something created within the city called “the artist’s pass.” She believed that cities were more vibrant with a healthy arts community and that artists needed to be able to see all kinds of art in order to thrive- music, dance and the art museums. She lobbied hard to create a pass that would enable artists to get into museums for free and get seats in auditoriums that weren’t sold out. It was so forward thinking and so generous both for the city and for artists she might never know. That’s who she was to me. Smart, caring and determined. The city wouldn’t budge but I so admired her tenacity and flat out badger quality. Her work was incredible. Aside from being visually beautiful she had history and philosophy all woven into her work. She was unlike any other. We talked pretty much everyday for the year before our kids left for college about how sad we were that our kids were leaving and about how much we loved them and would miss them. We hadn’t realized until the year before they would leave that when they left, that also meant no more breakfasts everyday together, no more living together. It sounds silly but we both didn’t understand the full loss until it was right up upon us. She loved her family. She loved her work. Jan was smart, she was a good friend and an inspiration in so many ways. We’re all a little less fortunate without her.

Amy Kann

Amy Kann - August 18, 2024 at 08:42 PM

TH

“ I met Jan through her sister, Karen, who was my suitemate at French Hall, Western Michigan University. She always seemed wise beyond her years to me. In the late '70's I was living in Saline, Michigan which was close to Ann Arbor. Jan came to exhibit at the Ann Arbor Art Fair every year and crashed on my couch. That always gave us time to catch up once a year. I was so thrilled to have a few of her pieces and still get compliments on them whenever I wear them. Jan was a unique individual with a talent that was unsurpassed. She was also an amazing woman who will be missed by many.

Trish Hawarny

Trish Hawarny - August 18, 2024 at 08:41 PM

TG

“ My sister in law Jan was a very special person. Such a superb talent in metals with many awards in her field. Jan probably could have been a counselor because she always liked to give you good advice. Jan had a green thumb with a beautiful flower garden on the corner of her block. Karen and I would visit Jan and Rick in Philly and always had a good time. We will miss you Jan. Love Tim Galvin

Timothy Galvin - August 18, 2024 at 07:57 PM

RO

“ Joe and I were obsessed with Jan's work as soon as we saw it in the 80's. The obsession grew with her "City Flora City Flotsam" work which we still consider brilliant. Over the years we visited, added pieces and communicated by phone. She epitomized "Artist".

Ron - August 18, 2024 at 05:27 PM

GB

“ I will miss Jan more than words can say. We met in Providence, RI when we both lived there in our 20s and later we both moved to the Philadelphia area. Our friendship spans decades and I feel I've lost part of my history with Jan's passing. To me, she was the wise soul who I often turned to for guidance through the years. She counseled me on everything from jobs to finances to dating and marriage. She always knew what to say. Recently, she helped me do research for a book I'm writing and I plan to acknowledge her work in the book. As gifted as Jan was, she was also the most down-to-earth person. I will never forget her.



Gloria Barone - August 18, 2024 at 05:24 PM

GB

My heart goes out to Julia and to Mike and all who knew and loved Jan. She was truly one-of-kind. She made me a beautiful silver engraved necklace for me when my daughter was born and I will cherish that, and our friendship.

Gloria Barone - August 18, 2024 at 05:34 PM

PA

“ My friendship with Jan started at 915 Spring Garden Street in the 80's where we both had studios for over 30 years. She was my go to friend and confidant. We shared stories and discussed strategies in our chosen fields. She always had incredibly practical ideas about being an artist, and how to be a success. She told me recently about driving around Detroit with her father, who as a salesman knew how to approach a client. She learned quickly how to get her message across. Her beautiful work says so much and is crafted with so much attention to detail.

Our lunches at Whole Foods and our tea time in her kitchen were so special to me. I only wish I had time for one more meet up and one more hug. I miss her presence so very much.

Julia and Mike, Jack and I are thinking of you and will see you very soon.

Patricia - August 18, 2024 at 05:16 PM

CC

“ I knew Jan since the early 1980's when we all moved into the 915 Spring Garden artists studio building. Her jewelry was impressive and so was her wisdom. I often quote her when I'm teaching "Notice what you notice" is something that inspires my work and I share it others.

I have been wearing a piece of her jewelry, a simple necklace which is a simple gold pendant cast from a found pebble on one of her signature chains. I have worn it 24/7 for two decades. I also have a heart pendant on my key chain.

A highlight was when my husband Elliot and I joined a posse of Jan's friends to go to London for her V and A show. Very exciting!

After 915 closed, I would come over to Jan's and we would walk to Buena Onda to get fish tacos.

She was so strong fighting the cancer for so long and taking care of her beloved Rick.

They were so lucky to have Julia whom they loved so much.

I will think of her every day and miss her when I look in the mirror and see my necklace.

Carol Cole

Carol Cole - August 18, 2024 at 05:10 PM

BS

I am grateful for Jan's gift of the butterfly garden on the corner next to her house. In the springtime I never let a day go by without stopping to see what has blossomed overnight! And thanks to Jan, on a very busy corner in center city, we can hear birdsong in the pine trees!

Beth Shay - August 19, 2024 at 01:56 PM

TM

Jan was one of Paul's earliest students at Western Michigan University. She quickly became more than a student and grew into a good friend. On Tuesday nights at our house many of Paul's students, including Jan would come for Tuesday nite spaghetti. It was a full house with our 5 children and whoever else showed up. Often students would bring friends along and we had a jolly time. One nite Jan brought dinner over-a foreign dish to us that was wrapped in grape leaves and we sat on the floor and ate with our fingers, Our kids who are now in their 50s and 60s still remember that fun and intersting experience, We loved Jan and are so sorry she is gone though glad the suffering is over.

Brenda and Paul Mergen

The Mergens - August 24, 2024 at 10:09 AM

PH

Jan and I met at RISD where we were both graduate students. She went on to build a happy life in her artistic work, with Rick and then Julia as a family. As an artist and craftsperson she was extraordinary. We all appreciate her for her creativity, curiosity, and humility. I always think of a story she told about having a residency at Peters Valley. A visitor watched her for a good length of time and finally asked "When are you going to start working?" She explained that she spent half her time looking for the right tool and so she actually had been working. You know that she said it with a smile and a twinkle in her eye, so that the visitor felt included in the joke.

Here is a photo from Jan and Rick's wedding. Maybe you can't see the wooden fish decoys on the floor, made by a Michigan fisherman.

Visiting Jan' house was always a delight, to see her offbeat collection of things that she enjoyed and which inspired her.

In several phone conversations this last year she talked about how wonderful it was that she and Rick were able to attend Julia and Michael's wedding. Thanks to you both for making it possible and bringing them such happiness and supporting them through their illnesses.

Peggy

Peggy Hart - August 27, 2024 at 06:18 AM

SP

Jan was a dear friend to many, including me. Not sure how I would have gotten through much of life's muck without her, and I'll be missing her forever. As Steve mentioned, she supported many behind the scenes, and I'm certainly one of those.

As a fellow artist, it was hard to imagine a 'summary' of any kind to post here but decided in the end to highlight just that – her huge capacity to capture her orbit, translate it creatively, and share, with all of us. She was so talented, and with such high standards as an artist & craftsperson, of utmost integrity, and connected through that work with immense generosity and thoughtfulness.

I thought I would add photos of her delightful sidewalk tulips, that in many ways mirrored this generosity. They sprouted wildly and happily every year, in the sidewalk cracks from which she was also inspired, adjacent to the empty lot she filled with flowers, around her Philadelphia row home, for all to enjoy.

Rest in peace my friend. Thank you for all the beauty you brought to the world and left for all to enjoy.

Sue Patterson - November 03, 2024 at 02:17 PM