



Janis Diane Lehmann

December 29, 1946 - January 2, 2026

Janis Lehmann, a lifelong Visalian, passed away on Jan. 2 after a long illness. She is remembered for her dedication to those who didn't have a voice, her leadership skills and adventurous spirit.

Janis was born on Dec. 29, 1946 to James and Nita Mathews and raised on their turkey ranch north of Visalia. She was born with a dislocated hip, which caused her to be in a body cast, traction and a brace as a toddler and young child.

Her grandfather was a doctor in Oklahoma and knew of a doctor in Oklahoma City who was doing treatments for dislocated hips. Janis lived with her grandparents for a while in Oklahoma while she was being treated. Back in Visalia after coming home from the little country Taurusa School, she sometimes would have to lay in bed in traction. It made her a good observer of people.

Despite her physical disability, she took ballet lessons, backpacked, was president of 4-H, was a good swimmer and acted in school plays. She loved to dance. After graduating from Redwood High School in 1964, where she was active in many clubs, Janis attended College of the Sequoias for two years and earned her B.A. in history at the University of Iowa. A few years later she completed

her secondary teaching credential and California learning handicapped credential.

Janis taught and did training in various special education positions for 36 years, including Dinuba High School, Green Acres Middle School and Tulare Joint Union High School. Her daughter Amy remembers when Amy was a young girl, she would drive with her mother in their VW bug doing home visits, taking students home out in the country and sometimes buying clothes for children who didn't have them. Janis took her special education students to Amy's plays so they could have an outing

In 1991, Janis got her masters in education, followed by her California Administrative Services Credential.

In 1993 she was named continuation high school principal of Tech Prep High School in Tulare, the first female principal in the Tulare Joint Union High School District.

Janis helped establish a health careers program at Tech Prep so graduates could take the state CNA test right out of high school. She got her students to visit the school farm next door to expand their learning.

She met John Lehman while both were involved in administering special education services and programs and for both, it was attraction at first sight. She and John were married for 43 years and raised their blended family of four children. The couple enjoyed traveling. They visited their former exchange student in Italy. Janis ziplined in Costa Rica. She loved riding on the back of John's motorcycle. She and John taught aerobics at the YMCA. Janis was always ready to go.

Janis' parents had been active in the community, and Janis always wanted to be of service. She always looked for the best in people. She served on many committees and boards. She was president of the Tulare County Youth

Commission, Tulare Sunrise Rotary, and a member of the California

Association of Health Career Educators, California Continuation of Education Association and American Association of University Women. She was very involved with the Manuel Torrez Boxing Club, encouraging her students to participate. She helped establish a scholarship for Tulare Tech Prep graduates.

She was a finalist for Tulare County Administrator of the Year and named Association of California School Administrators Alternate Educator of the Year. After retiring in 2008, Janis continued her advocacy, working with a community challenge grant and teen pregnancy prevention grant. She also became a practitioner (lay minister) with the Center for Spiritual Living, where she helped teach classes, coordinated fundraisers and was president of the board.

Janis is survived by her husband John, their children Amy Grodzienski (Jay), Justin Drum, Carrie Coffin (Eric) and Jenny Lehmann; their grandchildren Ryan Grodzienski, Hali Flores, Bett Coffin, and Zoe and Kylie Pesentheiner, and four great grandchildren.

She is also survived by sister Susan Mathews (William) and brother Jimmy Mathews.

A celebration of life will be held for Janis at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25 at the Center for Spiritual Living, 117 S. Locust, Visalia. In lieu of flowers, gifts can be made to Foodlink for Tulare County

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillar.com

d.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN **25**. 3:00 PM (PT)

Center for Spiritual Living
117 S. Locust
Visalia, CA 93291

Tribute Wall

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“ This woman was incredible. My son Leonard Vasquez highly respected her for believing in him and redirecting his focus when he was headed in the wrong direction while attending Tech Prep. His last week of battling cancer he wanted to see her. I contacted her and another teacher. Janice came to visit him that day. He passed the next day, he wanted to say goodbye to her. She loved her students. She impacted many. Heaven gained an angel. Janice established a memorial scholarship in his memory. Irene Huizar

irene huizar - January 24 at 01:32 AM

JL

Irene thank you so much for your kind words about my beautiful wife of 43 years. John Lehmann

John lehmann - February 01 at 06:30 PM