



Laurel "Laurie" Ann Parker

August 15, 1951 - February 10, 2026

Laurel Ann Parker passed away, after a long battle with cancer, on February 10, 2026.

She was 74 years old and is survived by her husband John III, her son, John Parker IV, his wife, Jessica and their wonderful children, Kendall and John V, whom she dearly loved. They called her "Gramma with the Sparkles", because of her personality and her love for jewelry.

She is also survived by her siblings; Michael, Eileen and Patrick Palace and her many special lifelong friends.

Laurie spent her entire 37 year career teaching art at Ephrata High School guiding thousands of students, with love and respect to become their best selves. They responded with their own love and respect, referring to her as "Mama Parker".

Laurie loved walking the beach for agates and exploring tidal pools. She also loved hiking the mountains and was an incredible skier. She was the most helpful, compassionate, and empathetic person I have ever known, besides being the best problem solver I've ever seen.

Laurie helped me achieve all my dreams; from a happy family to building our log home from scratch! She was a ferocious defender of the Arts. Her motto was, "More Art!" Every college freshman in Washington is required to have a "Fine Art" credit in high school, thanks to Laurie's efforts, when she was on the State Board of Art Education. She was also a founding board member of "Columbia Basin Allied Arts", which is still going strong today.

Laurel Ann Parker was an absolutely incredible human being, who gave to society rather than take from it. I've been privileged to spend the last 56 years of my life, with her. I and many others have been blessed knowing her.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Nicoles Funeral Home, June 13, 2026 at 2pm. Laurie's life was definitely well lived!

If desired, donations may be made in her name, to Columbia Basin Allied Arts.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 13. 2:00 PM (PT)

Nicoles Funeral Home
157 C St. N.W.
Ephrata, WA 98823
(509) 754-3420
bea.white@nicolesfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

LM

“ Some of my best memories of high school are in Mrs. Parker's art classes (85-89). She was always patient, guiding us to create our best art. After high school my goal was to become a graphic designer. She asked me to come share my portfolio and school experience with her classes. I was so honored. 20 years in the graphics design industry, I transitioned to teaching computer graphics at Eisenhower high school. No clue how to teach...but I had memories of a fantastic art teacher, Mrs. Parker, to guide me. She continues to be my goals for the kind of teacher I want to be. My fellow teacher, teaching drawing and painting, assigned a project like the one I did in hs art. I brought in several examples from my HS art class, that was shared with the class.



Leigh Maxwell - June 13 at 05:05 PM



“*Laurel was an incredible teacher, and I am forever grateful for the impact she had on my life. She had such a gift for encouraging her students to find their own muse, their own passion, and she was there to show us the way when we needed guidance, while stepping back so that our own voice would be evident in our work. I*

I have never forgotten what she told me when someone had asked about purchasing a piece of my artwork at the regional competition, advice that has served me well as a professional creative. She told me to price my work as the artist I aspired to be. That I could charge “\$20 any size” like the shows in the park, and a buyer would value my work accordingly. Or I could charge more, a price she suggested to me, which would encourage the buyer to value my artwork as that of a true artist, which garners a different kind of respect. I’ve followed her advice, and shared it with others. She was right, and because of her, I’ve been able to have a career that celebrates my creativity and artistry.

Shannon Hicks - June 10 at 01:06 AM



“*She was a wonderful person and so dedicated to her students and coworkers. She inspired our boy and many others, to unlock unknown artistic talents. I’m saddened to hear of her passing because she will be missed by many, and she was so loved by John, Johnny, and her extended family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.*

Kim Thomas - June 09 at 11:03 PM

JM

“*Laurel took me under her wing when I started teaching at Ephrata High School. She even went with me to deal with a problem and heard someone say to me “frankly lady, I think you are a pain in the ass”! We laughed together about that for many years. Blessings to the family and peaceful memories of a fantastic art teacher and caring person.*

Joan McDonnell - June 09 at 02:13 PM



“*Laurie was my art teacher, someone that probably had the most impact on my life. She opened the door to fashion, illustration printmaking you name it, she gave a few of us our senior year basically the freedom to do anything. She is the reason I do what I do today! I can still see her in her fabulous clothes and earrings gliding around the room student to student. Laurie that you for being a remarkable mentor and opening the world to us.*

Denise Dixon - June 08 at 03:33 AM

SV

“*So sorry to hear this. Laurel and I worked together at the high school for many years, as well as being fellow soccer moms! My sympathy goes out to her entire family. May your many special memories sustain you! ❤️*

Sigrid Vira - June 07 at 10:09 PM

AW

“ I first met Laurie in college at Western Washington University where we were both majoring in art. We graduated and went our ways, but we both ended up teaching in Grant County. It was so special to find her & John here, and hard to believe that was fifty years ago. She taught both our children (Ashley & Nick) when they were in high school and was a favorite teacher. Laurie was my bridesmaid and forever friend. We had so many special times together and shared a love of shopping for pretty things. While you have left us here, Laurie, you will always be remembered and loved. Rest in peace, my friend. 💕💕
Audrey White

Audrey White - June 05 at 05:32 PM

“ I loved her so much. She was, without a doubt, my favorite teacher and one of the most wonderful people I have ever had the privilege of knowing. I was lucky enough to have her as my art teacher for three and a half years, and she made such a lasting impact on my life. She was always so kind, patient, and encouraging. No matter what was going on, she treated her students with respect and compassion, and she had a way of making everyone feel seen and valued.

One thing I will always remember about Mrs. Parker was how beautifully she carried herself. She dressed to the nines every single day, always looking elegant and put together. Her beautiful black hair was always perfectly styled, and she brought such grace and confidence wherever she went. Walking into her classroom felt special because she put so much care into everything she did.

Her classroom was more than just a place to learn art. It was a place where creativity was encouraged, where students felt welcome, and where so many memories were made. It truly wasn't the same whenever she had to be out. Her presence brought so much warmth and life to the room, and you could immediately feel when she wasn't there.

Even after I graduated, I stayed in touch with her. I would visit her at her home, and I remember how excited she was to introduce me to her little parakeet. Those visits meant so much to me because they showed that the connection she built with her students extended far beyond the classroom. She wasn't just a teacher; she was someone who genuinely cared about people.

I was heartbroken when she was forced into retirement because she still had so much to offer. She touched the lives of countless students throughout her career, and I know I am just one of many people whose life was made better because of her kindness, guidance, and encouragement.

Mrs. Parker will be deeply missed, but the impact she had on her students and community will live on for years to come. I am so grateful for the years I got to spend learning from her and knowing her. Rest in peace, Mrs. Parker. Thank you for everything. ❤️

Cassie Hagen - June 05 at 04:15 PM



“ *I was so fortunate to spend several years teaching at EHS with Laurie. What a unique, creative, and beautiful soul! She made sure to connect with me when I was new in Ephrata and made me feel so welcome. She has left her mark in many places in this community and in the hearts of those she taught and with whom she taught. More Art Forever, Laurie ❤️*

Marcy Evenson - June 05 at 03:38 PM