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Sarah W. Jacobson

04/11/1939 – 02/28/2013

The Sandman came for Sarah Mary Williams Jacobson on February 28, 2013, extinguishing a bright, beautiful, powerful spirit who will be sorely missed by the many friends and family members who survive her. Born in Lincoln, Nebraska to Bill and Eleanor Williams on April 11, 1939, Sarah (aka “Sally”) would become older sister to Katherine Rhoades, who currently resides in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. A childhood filled with reading, and a resulting deeply rooted imagination led to fantasy games where Sarah would play “Mehitabel,” Girl Pioneer and Katherine would be deputized as her trusted steed, carting her through their neighborhood in a makeshift covered wagon. Sarah and Katherine were a team, with a time-tested agreement to always watch out for one another. Sarah stayed in Lincoln until 1956, leaving at that time to attend Grinnell College in Iowa. A true testament to her commitment to friendships, Sarah maintained ties with childhood, high school, and college friends throughout her lifetime. Sarah met James “Jim” Jacobson (deceased) at Grinnell and went on to share 45 years of marriage, which included the joy and challenge of raising five children together – Janna, James, Ben, Abbe and Amy. Not afraid to embrace new experiences, Sarah followed the course of her family’s life creating homes in Iowa, California, Florida, and Connecticut. After nearly 15 years of being a committed mother and wife, Sarah went back to school, turning her college degree into an MBA and finally a PhD. This advanced education, of which she was extraordinarily proud, brought her to an eventual tenured position at North Dakota State University in Fargo, where she and Jim lived for eight years. Their last move was to Bellingham, WA. In



addition to her five children and their respective partners, Sarah is also survived by her four grandchildren: Hudson Claire Jacobson, Samuel Kopf, Eleanor Kopf and Cypress Jacobson-Wong. Hosting overnights, catching football games, seeing school plays, reading stories, exploring nature together, boasting to friends – Sarah was nothing if not proud of these four sweet souls, each of whom share characteristics of their grandmother that will keep her legacy alive. In the last four years of her life, Sarah was able to find love again in longtime Bellingham resident John Reay, a retired Western Washington University math professor. This unexpected bond led to a grand wedding celebration attended by hundreds, and then to travel all over the world from Central America to Europe to Alaska and the Caribbean too. In 2012 alone, Sarah took three overseas trips extending across the far reaches of Peru and the Galapagos, to a missionary trip in Nicaragua and a journey to Borneo with oldest daughter Janna and her partner Andrea Gabriel, both Bellingham residents. Sarah always gave back to her community, and was involved in many organizations in Bellingham. She was treasurer of the Bellingham Music Club, a member of the Vestry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and an alto in Whatcom Chorale. She was also an active member of P.E.O., Bellingham Newcomers, and First Congregational Church, where she started a knitting group. All of these life experiences point to a woman who was deeply curious about the world and profoundly moved by everything the universe offered her. With a sharp and hysterically funny wit, Sarah was a voracious reader, a lover of nature and an avid hiker until her diagnosis of ovarian cancer which ultimately took her life after a fierce battle. She died peacefully at home, surrounded by loved ones. A family gathering was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Memorials may be made to the Whatcom Hospice Foundation.