



## Barbara Bretz Heisinger

April 18, 1940 - January 2, 2019

Barbara Bretz Heisinger (1940-2019)

CEDAR FALLS, IA — Barbara Bretz Heisinger, 78, formerly of Vermillion, SD, died January 2, 2019 at Western Home Communities of Alzheimer's disease.

She was born April 18, 1940 in Bryan, Texas, to Theodore Bretz and Elizabeth Sloane Bretz. Barb grew up in Columbia, Missouri, where her father was a professor of botany at the University of Missouri.

Barb attended the University Lab School in Columbia, graduating from high school in 1958. She was active in school activities, loved academic challenges, and was proud to be named UESTA Queen. After graduation, Barb attended Scripps College in San Diego, California, and then lived in Zurich, Switzerland with her family during her father's sabbatical. She had many happy memories of her family's adventures in Europe.

Upon return, Barb attended the University of Missouri in Columbia, where she received a BS in Botany and met her husband, James Heisinger. Jim was a biology graduate student and then doctoral student who graded a discussion group for one of Barb's classes.

Barb and Jim married on January 28, 1962. Barb undertook the monumental

task of editing and typing Jim's doctoral thesis, as well as Jim's early research publications. They moved to Saint Louis, Missouri where Jim was an assistant biology professor at the University of Missouri in St. Louis and where their daughter Lorelei was born.

Barb and Jim moved to Vermillion, South Dakota in 1968 when Jim took a position as biology professor at the University of South Dakota. Their son Ted was born in Vermillion. Barb stayed home with their children when they were young but later began working at the University of South Dakota Law School Library. She then completed her Master's Degree in Library Science from Emporia State University and continued to work at the law library as a librarian.

Barb enjoyed gardening, swimming, bicycling, reading, sewing and knitting, and baking. She loved linguistics, and spoke German and French. She was a master Scrabble player, winning every game the family played.

As might be expected of a botanist, Barb's garden was huge — almost the equivalent in size to a 50 meter 8 lane swimming pool. She grew vegetables of every kind as well as flowers, and also planted numerous evergreen and fruit trees. She kept many houseplants inside and a favorite winter activity was reviewing seed catalogs and planning next year's garden. She corresponded with an expert in the genus *Allium cipa* L. (onion), and when he retired, he sent her specimens of his entire onion collection of many varieties, which she planted.

Barb enjoyed swimming all her life. A favorite activity as a child and young woman was swimming at the quarry not far from her home. She made sure her children took swimming lessons and took the family to the pool every summer evening. She also swam laps every day, year round, and then swam competitively, winning many races. She took up long distance swimming, and

competed successfully in a 5 mile open water swim in Minnesota, winning her age group, with Ted and Jim as her escorts in a canoe.

Barb and Jim both enjoyed bicycling. After retirement, Barb and Jim took many bicycle trips. They rode in Ragbrai one year, and then spent several consecutive summers tracing Lewis and Clark's route from Missouri to the Pacific, completing one leg of the trip each summer. They traveled solo, just the two of them, camping and staying in motels along the route. They also took trips in northern Florida, South Dakota, and Missouri.

Barb enjoyed reading and collecting books. A favorite activity was to attend auctions and purchase books, amassing an extensive collection of many botanical and classical literature. She was such an auction enthusiast that once she bought a corn crib, drafting Jim and Ted to dismantle it piece by piece to bring home.

She is survived by her husband; her daughter, Lorelei (Donald) Redfern of Cedar Falls; her son, Ted (Dawn Turner) Heisinger of Madison, Wisconsin; and her grandsons, Benson, Harrison and Grant Redfern of Cedar Falls. She is also survived by her brothers, Peter Bretz of Austin, Texas and William Bretz of El Cajon, California. She was preceded in death by her parents.

A private family service will be held at a later date. Richardson Funeral Service is assisting the family.

Memorials may be directed to Western Home Communities, Cedar Falls, Iowa or to the Spirit Mound Trust, Vermillion, SD (<http://www.spiritmound.com>).

The family wishes to extend their gratitude to Western Home Communities, especially to all employees at Nation Cottage, for their loving and respectful

care; and to Unity Point Hospice.

# Tribute Wall

RL

“*Barbara graduated from the University High School in Columbia, MO in 1958. She will be remembered for her unflappable courage and upbeat spirit. Donnie Hagen, her classmate and close friend, posted a beautiful remembrance. Although the school graduated its last senior class in 1973, we have a website that honors the memories of our alums, faculty, and friends and we invite any of the Bretz family members to register at [www.uhighlives.org](http://www.uhighlives.org). On behalf of the U-High website team, we extend condolences to Barbara’s family, and to Peter and Bill Bretz. Barbara will be deeply missed but not forgotten.*

*Bob Luebbers – Web Shepherd*



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**Robert Luebbers** - February 08, 2019 at 05:07 AM

DH

“*Barbara Bretz was my first girlfriend in kindergarten at Grant school in Columbia in 1945. She was also my high school sweetheart and I remember how very kind she and her family were to me in the 1950’s. We used to swim together in the quarry at Quarry Heights where her family lived. Barbara was a wonderful artist from an early age and as intelligent as anyone I ever met. My deepest condolences to her family at this sad time.*

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**Donnie Hagan** - January 11, 2019 at 10:54 AM

MB

“ i remember the Heisinger clan coming out to visit my sister Sarah, me and our family on the ranch that was all our grandmother's home in east San Diego county. They were all so healthy. And happy. I remember being a little jealous for no good reason. Barb and Jim were such great partners and parents. And we idolized Lorelie and Ted and love playing with them. Barb seemed to me to be the most extraordinary type of modern woman. She was an intellectual. A home maker in the literal sense that she knew how to cook and sew and probably change the oil in the car. She was funny and kind and she had already passed that on to her kids by the time I knew them. To me she defied all stereotypes and yet at the same time was one of the classics. She will be sorely missed but she also made many a beautiful mark on the world.

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**Matt Bretz** - January 10, 2019 at 12:40 AM

DE

“ I remember meeting barb and ber husband and was just in awe the energy they both had, bless them ❤️

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**DENISE** - January 08, 2019 at 08:26 PM

LR

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



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**Lorelei Heisinger Redfern** - January 08, 2019 at 09:01 AM

JM

“ *Joa & Joan Meanya sent a virtual gift in memory of Barbara Bretz Heisinger*



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**Joa & Joan Meanya** - January 07, 2019 at 05:23 PM

JM

*Our sincere condolences to your family Lorelei.*

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**Joe & Joan Meany** - January 07, 2019 at 05:25 PM

JY

*Jim  
So sorry to hear of Barb's passing. We send our condolences and please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers*

*Jerry and Barb Yutrzenka*

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**Jerry and Barb Yutrzenka** - January 15, 2019 at 12:12 PM

FM

*Sorry to hear of Barb's death. Having lost Jean to alzheimers, I can sympathize with you. My thoughts are with your family*

*Finley Marshall*

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**Finley D. Marshall** - January 18, 2019 at 12:07 PM