



In Memoriam

Layla Marie Smith Bockhorst, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, friend, and teacher passed away November 3, 2022 at the age of 76 surrounded by family and friends.

Layla was born to Dallas and Jessie Hagen Smith in Miles City, Montana. Her family moved to Cut Bank, Montana in 1958. After graduating high school Layla attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon. It was here she met her husband of forty-nine years, James Bockhorst.

At Reed she was first introduced to Zen Buddhism which would become her lifelong passion. She was profoundly influenced by the founder of the San Francisco Zen Center, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, and spent many years at the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, as well as the City Center and Green Gulch Farm. It was while at Green Gulch that her one daughter, Sarah, was born. Layla went on to become a teacher at the Mountain Source Sangha, which she found profoundly moving and fulfilling.

Aside from Zen Buddhism, Layla's other passions included bicycling and any activity that involved being outdoors. She had many favorite places in California to camp, hike, and bicycle, frequently taking solo trips which she loved planning. Perhaps her favorite place of all was Glacier National Park in Montana. Layla grew up in a small community near Glacier Park and participated in many family camping trips to this gorgeous and wild place. It was during these formative years that her love for nature and outdoor activities was born. Layla formed a small Zen group in Helena, Montana and travelled to Montana frequently.

Layla was authentically and wholeheartedly there for those in her life. She made the time to show up for everyone who reached out, providing caring, trustworthy and wise counsel. Peace, equanimity, and kindness permeated her being. Everyone she knew will greatly cherish her impact on their lives, either through love, friendship, mentorship or spiritual teaching. Her Buddhist name – Gyokujun Teishin (Pure Forge, Constant Heart) – embodied her path.

Layla was preceded in death by her parents, Dallas and Jessie. She is survived by her husband James, daughter Sarah, son-in-law Robert Lucarini, her beloved grandchildren, Alexander (Alex) and Sophia Lucarini, her sister Robyn Armstrong, and her brothers, Kim and Loren Smith.



Her family would like to thank the Hospice team for their compassionate care. They would also like to thank all the friends and family who came for visits, called or sent letters. Although Layla may not have had a chance to reply personally to all those who reached out, the outpouring of love is indicative of the impact she had on all those around her and brought her great comfort in her final months and weeks.

Notifying her many students and friends of her move to hospice she concluded with this verse by an early Buddhist nun: "Here at the end, part of me still wants to go back and kiss every inch of every road I ever walked. But it's enough just to say thank you – and goodbye". Layla will be sorely missed by her family, friends and students, but her presence will be carried forward by all her knew her.

Memorial services are tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 25th at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center. In her memory donations may be made to Mountain Source Sangha (mtsource.org) or to San Francisco Zen Center (sfzc.org).