



Janice W. Butcher

February 8, 1950 - April 11, 2026

Jan Butcher, age 76, of Michigan, passed away on April 11, 2026.

Born in 1950, Jan was a woman of vibrant spirit and unwavering principle. She dedicated her professional life to education, spending most of her career as a beloved teacher at Upland Hills School in Oxford, Michigan. A mentor to many, Jan's influence extended far beyond the classroom; she remained a cherished figure in the lives of her former students and colleagues long after her retirement. Her love of science and space inspired her students to reach for the stars and push themselves to achieve their goals.

Jan's heart belonged to the earth and her community. An active and passionate citizen, she was a fixture in local civic life, frequently volunteering at polling places during elections and proudly raising her voice at peaceful protests. Her Democratic pride and commitment to justice were matched only by her love for the natural world, which she spent her life honoring and protecting. Jan's spirit was equally present at Lake Orion United Methodist Church. A dedicated member, she lent her voice to the church choir every week and served her congregation with a servant's heart.

Above all, Jan was the steadfast cornerstone of her family. She was a devoted mother to Allison (Michael) Brenner and Emily (Peter) Zabel. As a grandmother to Wesley, Eli, Jack, and Elle, Jan possessed a rare gift: she found a way to forge a unique and special bond with each of them, making every grandchild feel singularly loved and understood.

She leaves behind a legacy of activism, education, and an immense capacity

for love. She will be deeply missed by her family and friends.

A celebration of Jan's life will be held on Saturday, June 13th at 1 PM at Lake Orion United Methodist Church, 140 E. Flint Street, Lake Orion, MI 48362.

Jan's family wishes to honor her memory by supporting research into the rare cancer that took her life. In lieu of flowers, they kindly request that memorial contributions be made to The EHE Foundation at [fightehe.org](https://www.fightehe.org) (<https://www.fightehe.org>), to help fund the search for treatments and a cure for this one-in-a-million disease.

Memorial contributions may also be made to: Upland Hills School at [uplandhills.org](https://www.uplandhills.org) (<https://www.uplandhills.org>), or to NPR at [npr.org](https://www.npr.org) (<https://www.npr.org>).

Arrangements entrusted to Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, Plymouth.

To share a memory, please use the "Share a Memory" tab on this webpage.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 13. 1:00 PM (ET)

Lake Orion United Methodist Church
140 E. Flint Street
Lake Orion, MI 48362

Tribute Wall

ZJ

“ I visited Jan in Livonia and was able to say see you later. Jan was an incredible influence on my self esteem and creativity as a child. I had her for my last two years at UHS before I transferred to U of D Jesuit’s Academy. I was on the last ever Beaver Island Trip before it became a Camp Arbutus Trip. When I close my eyes and think of Jan, I see the Suttons Bay Marina where we would run into to each other many different summers. I see Tapped Maple Trees, Snapping Turtles and Wood Frogs. I also used to read her letter to me and her messages when I was going through my own Cancer Journey. 11 years free this summer. Jan is someone you can never forget. She will continue to live on in her beautiful family and extended family, us.

Zack Joseph - June 09 at 09:46 PM

JH

“ I know Jan primarily is a board member of the Meadowbrook Hills Board of Directors She was always positive upbeat and I seem to detect the undercurrent of a wry sense of humor with every engagement. I will remember her fondly for her intelligent, insightful and Meaningful level heavy contributions to the community.
John G Harte

John G Harte - June 02 at 11:33 AM

SS

“ My Aunt Jan made the BEST pies. She believed in me when I could not believe in myself. Her voice and memory will echo throughout my entire life. You are missed. See you next time.

Sam

Sam Sadler - May 27 at 03:36 PM

KW

“ I will remember Jan for the steady, upbeat and curious person at she was. I have a large insect collection. Jan wanted me to share the collection with several of her grandson. So I did. Just another example of Jan wanting to share the natural world. Forever, the science teacher. It has been a privilege to know and work with her these last forty years.

Ken Webster - April 27 at 03:06 PM

CS

“ Jan would come visit every winter for at least a month, we had so much fun working at the Arts & Crafts Festival and going to the many events on Sanibel. Jan was always up for a bike ride or a visit to the beach. Susan & I will miss her so much. We love you Jan.

Chet Sadler - April 26 at 01:46 PM

PM

“ We were on Retreat in Northport, Michigan. The Sweet Sea we call Lake Michigan was just outside our cabin. It was February and the entire shore line was ours. A fire in our fireplace and dinner in our stomachs. We sang Michigan Tall Trees, the Big Mac not the burger but the Bridge, and we discovered our voices blending and harmonizing...the individual self left in favor of being We...One...and from inside her there came a voice we had not yet heard...the voice of Louis Armstrong singing 'What a wonderful world' . There was laughter which soon became tears...as the words Jan sang transformed the moment ...I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom for me and you
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world

*I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed days, the dark sacred nights
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world*

*The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces of people going by
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?"
They're really saying, "I love you"*

*I hear babies cry, I watch them grow
They'll learn much more than I'll ever know
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world*

Phil Moore - April 25 at 08:37 AM

JM

“ I distinctly remember her dressing as a Red Nova one year for Halloween. How fun it was to make our paper-mache planets. The constant tumbling of the rocks in the rock machine as she taught.

Our carpool car was always one of the first to arrive to school each morning and Jan was the only staff member to beat us there and have the doors unlocked for us. It was always her smile that greeted me each morning and she is thought of often in our family. Such a beautiful person ❤️
All the love to the family

Jessica Manderfield - April 24 at 05:42 PM