



# A FOND FAREWELL



“Some memories are realities, and are better than anything that can ever happen to one again.”

Willa Cather



## Jane Valentine Barker

Founding Member - Past WWW Treasurer  
May 17, 1930 – April 23, 2020



Jane Patten Valentine Barker, writer, socialite, and life-long resident of Boulder, was awarded the Colorado Author's League Top Hand Award for

Mainstream Fiction for *Mari*, a biographical novel of the life of frontierswoman Mari Sandoz. She also authored 76 *Historic Homes of Boulder Colorado*, *Historic Homes of Boulder County*, and, with Women Writing the West Founding Member Sybil Downing, 13 Colorado history books for children. She was a freelance historical columnist for the Sunday Focus section of the Boulder Daily Camera, penning "Over the Shoulder" columns for more than 11 years, and was awarded the 1979 Colorado Presswomen Woman of Achievement Award.

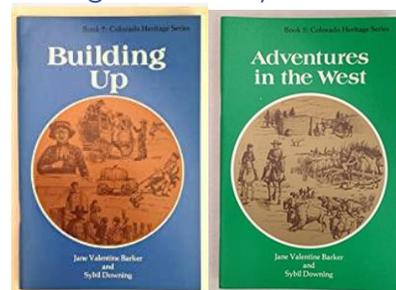
Jane attended University Hill School, then Boulder High School. She went on to earn her General Education degree and Teaching Certificate from the University of Colorado Boulder in 1952. She was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority,

and maintained lifelong friends through the group. Jane taught high school Speech and Drama, and later worked with her father at Valentine Hardware as Assistant Bookkeeper. On September 11, 1952, Jane married Richard Thurston Barker.

Jane was proud to be a Founding Member of Women Writing the West, an organization dedicated to the recognition of women and their contribution to the history and culture of the American West. She served on the board of Bank One and the Boulder Community Hospital Foundation. She was a lifetime member of First Presbyterian Church, a member of PEO Chapter BY, and the DAR. Jane enjoyed time with groups such as Boulder Corral of Westerners, Current Events Group, and Third Thursday Group.

Jane remains loved and cherished by those she leaves behind: Richard, her husband of 67 years; two sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Two of Jane's collaborations with Women Writing the West Founding Member Sybil Downing:





## Nell Brown Propst

*Founding Member*

*September 23, 1925 – July 18, 2019*



Nell Brown Propst was a noted historian of northeastern Colorado who authored a number of books about the region, including “Where the Buffalo

Roamed,” a drama about the history of Logan County that was presented as an official event of the 1959 *Colorado Rush to the Rockies* and 1987 Logan County centennial.

Nell loved theatre from a young age and started writing and conducting plays at the age of twelve. This led to a lifetime of writing and producing community theatre productions. She graduated at the age of 19 from Howard College, a private Christian university in Alabama, now known as Samford University, with a degree in English and Theatre. She taught at Talladega, Alabama for two years, then accepted a teaching position at Sterling Junior College in Sterling, Colorado. After venturing from the wooded landscape of Alabama to the treeless plains of Colorado, she quickly fell in love with the wide-open spaces and amazing blue skies. Several years later she obtained a

M.S. degree in theatre at the University of Denver. “Where the Buffalo Roamed” was her master’s thesis. In 1956 she produced and directed this outdoor pageant at the Sterling Fairgrounds, of which there were 350 cast members and 150 people in the crew!

Nell met her husband Thomas in 1948 at the University of Denver. Following his service in the Korean war, they returned to the Propst Bar 3 Ranch in Merino, Colorado. While life as a ranch wife and mother was demanding, she still managed to direct numerous community theatre productions, write over 30 plays, books, short stories, magazine and newspaper articles, and book reviews. She was actively involved in the local historical society and her efforts to research the people and history of the area with accuracy and wisdom were relentless. She was a true historian of northeastern Colorado.

Despite her many professional accomplishments, family and associates can attest that Nell’s greatest attribute was her steadfast devotion as a friend, mentor, loving wife and mother. She was very intentional about encouraging others in their pursuits.

Nell had four children, 17 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.



## Jane Morton

Member

*November 13, 1931–February 16, 2020*



Jane Morton was born to Eva and William Ambrose in Colorado Springs, and her family owned and operated a cattle ranch

near Fort Morgan. She graduated from Fort Morgan High School and Colorado State College of Education in Greeley.

In 1953 Jane married Richard "Dick" Morton. The couple raised three children and lived in Denver, Englewood, Breckenridge and Colorado Springs. For more than twenty-five years they spent winters in Mesa, Arizona and also enjoyed their little house in Creede, Colorado in the summertime.

In addition to teaching school, Jane was a writer, publishing more than ten books including novels for young readers, picture books and a Father Dyer church history. She wrote and performed cowboy poetry for twenty years, telling stories of ranch life, people, and western history. Honored with many national awards,

her poetry continues to be featured on [www.cowboypoetry.com](http://www.cowboypoetry.com).

Jane said, "Someone asked me how long it took to write a poem. I thought a moment, and then I knew. All my life."

Her books of poetry include *Turning to Face the Wind* and *In this Land of Little Rain*.

Left to cherish her memory are husband Dick, children John (Kasia) Morton, Lizabeth (John) Duckworth, and Mary (James) Crawford. Her five grandchildren are James (Alison) Crawford, Rich Crawford, Heather (Matt) Dane, Chris (Siana) Duckworth and Jon Duckworth. She is also survived by five great-grandchildren.





## Lee Rostad

*Member*

*October 28, 1929 - March 17, 2020*



Lee Birkett Rostad, historian, writer, and artist, passed away in Bozeman, Montana. Born Ellalee Birkett in Roundup, Montana, Lee attended

schools in Roundup before attending the University of Montana where she received a degree in History and Political Science. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and spent the following year pursuing post-graduate study at the University of London. In 1952 she returned to Montana and married her college sweetheart, Phil Rostad, an officer in the Air Force. She taught school in Great Falls until Phil was transferred to a military hospital in Kyoto, Japan, where she joined him in the summer of 1953. They spent an adventurous year in Japan and they returned to run the family ranch on the Bozeman Fork of the Musselshell River.

Lee was a tireless part of the Rostad ranching operation -- cooking for haying crews, moving cows, operating machinery, irrigating, keeping a garden, feeding cows in winter, and raising her two boys. She

and the boys moved to Helena where she taught English, returning to the ranch every weekend and summer to resume the responsibilities of a ranch wife. Lee came back to Martinsdale in 1972 and in addition to her ranching responsibilities started the Chicken House Pottery; spending the next years making and selling pottery, painting, and writing.

An accomplished author, Lee published many articles and seven books on Montana history, including biographies of legendary sheep man Charles M. Bair and acclaimed author Grace Stone Coates (for which she was a Finalist for the Women Writing the West 2004 WILLA Literary Award). Lee served many years on the Montana Historical Society Board. Because of her contributions to Montana and the humanities, she received an Honorary Doctorate from Rocky Mountain College in 1994, the Governor's Humanities award in 2001 and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Montana in 2004.

Lee is survived by Phil, her husband of 68 years, two sons, four grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. She leaves behind many close friends and family who will miss her dearly.



## Jenny Hancey

WWW Graphic Designer

February 3, 1973 – August 2, 2020



*Written by Lenore Mitchell, Jenny's loving mom.*

This is hard to write, much less to believe, but our sweet Jen was overcome by severe thyroid issues and the

complex toxicities involved that she could no longer tolerate it. Some say that suicide is a selfish act, but Jen didn't want to die; she needed to escape the debilitating anxiety and panic attacks that increasingly plagued her and grew especially debilitating the past few months. It had to take courage and strength for her to do this all alone, down in her beloved barn, with only her horses standing watch. Our hearts are broken, our lives will never be the same without her.

She spent some days and nights in my home, and I treasure these hours with her even though at times she was struggling so much. But all along, every single day she was either with me or home with Scott (husband) and Alex (son), she kept up her long-term, home-based graphic design business. I had to

coax her to take time out to rest. She was full of love for Alex, for Scott, for everyone. Her many friends and clients join us in mourning the loss of her smile, her sweet nature, and yes, her love of life. When Michele called from Florida to check on her sister, she may not have grasped the seriousness of the situation. None of us wanted to, really.

When Jen was five, we moved from Littleton to North Turkey Creek, where her love of animals included horses, dogs, cats, and other critters. She fed orphaned raccoons and skunks, helped birds recover from window accidents. But that's not all. She loved the tiny critters too, especially spiders. Orb weavers were a favorite.

She earned a Bachelors in Fine Art from CSU, then worked for several graphic design firms before establishing her own home-based graphics business. She and Scott married at Boettcher Manion on Lookout Mountain on August 10, 1997. They welcomed Alex in 2005 and were delighted to watch him grow taller than his dad.

Jen loved animals, she loved her family, her friends, everyone. We mourn her leaving us, but she lives on in our memories. It's too bad there is no shelter for spiders - she didn't get around to that, but it would've been like her.