



Elizabeth Jane "Beth" Zelfer

MAR 26, 1952 - DEC 30, 2025



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Elizabeth Jane "Beth" Zelfer

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Beth Zelfer was born March 26, 1952, in Vancouver, WA and passed away unexpectedly at her home in Scappoose on Tuesday, December 30, 2025. She was planning to meet friends for lunch later that day. She will be remembered for her warmth, humor, and boundless enthusiasm for the people and activities she loved.

Beth was the youngest of 3 children born to Fred and Cornelia Zelfer. She is survived by her brother Joe, sister Geraldine "Gerry", and very special niece JoAnna (Craig), great nephews Kyle (Grace), Corbin, great niece Chenise, a great, great nephew, two great, great nieces, a large extended family, and many, many friends. She was predeceased by her parents Fred and Cornelia and her sister-in-law Peggy Zelfer. Beth graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in PE and Health. Jobs were scarce in the early 1970s, substitute teaching didn't pay bills, and being a night owl the graveyard shift at Multnomah Plywood in St Helens was appealing. She loved bantering with her crew, playing pinochle after the shift but soon realized turning sheets was not a long term proposition. Her interest in baking drew her to the apprenticeship program at Safeway. Apprenticing was progressing well until she started working in Vancouver and Camas. The longer drive required getting up even earlier and Beth hated mornings. She started leaning back to her educational degree. Teaching was in her blood; her mom, brother, sister-in-law, and sister were all teachers. Supplementing with Tupperware sales she picked up the required classes to be certified to teach grade school. She dedicated more than 25 years to teaching fourth grade. Teaching the curriculum but going over and above to make it interesting and fun. Catching flies in flight, playing the turkey nose game, finding the green on the Beaver bulletin board are treasured memories of her students and parents. Her room was always warm and welcoming. Beth coordinated the clam chowder fund raiser for many years to provide money for field trips. Using the



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Oregon Trail game allowed her students to experience history rather than just reading about it. To keep her skills current Beth earned her master's degree mid-career. She worked tirelessly to ensure her students were well prepared for the classes ahead of them.

Beth was a pioneer and competitor in women's sports. Playing volleyball on Brenda Foey's team in high school and Sally Hunter's team in college. She would tell stories of funds raisers for gas and their carpool adventures to games. Since the enactment of Title 9 in 1972 and the decades of fighting for fair and equal rights it's hard to grasp that college women's sports had no budgets. Despite the challenges she enjoyed the competition and the camaraderie. Returning to Scappoose after college she joined the women's fastpitch league as a catcher, forming lifelong friendships. She completed her sports career playing slow pitch. Retiring from playing she remained an avid fan of the Scappoose Indians, selling tickets at games, the OSU Beavers of course and watched college and professional teams as much as possible. Beth enjoyed, worked on, and attended reunions and so wanted to get the fastpitch team reunited. To stay competitive, she became the game master, pinocle, board games, spoons, trivia, bunco... She always had a new game for the next get together. While serving in Vietnam Joe sent Beth a high-quality camera that started her love of photography. She always had her camera with her for birthdays, family gatherings, every event. She would take the best candid photos, especially while assisting Dwight with his wedding photo business.

Beth had many talents, eager to try new things, always ready for a new adventure, and loved to tease. She was friendly, always smiling, and very welcoming to everyone. While taking tickets at the county fair she good-naturedly teased a guest with brand new cowboy boots; especially when he left and returned with different shoes, unaware that he was actually a fair official. Rather than being offended, he told another official she was the best thing to happen to the fair in a long time. I believe many whose lives were touched by Beth would wholeheartedly agree.

Color of the day for the celebration of Beth's life to be held on February 15, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00PM at Scappoose High School is her favorite -- purple. Wear a little or wear a lot in her honor and bring your stories to share.




Events


Elizabeth Jane "Beth" Zelfer

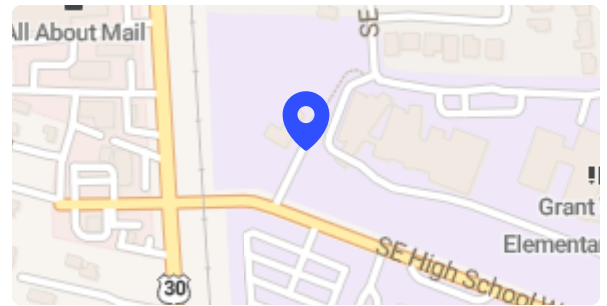
MAR 26, 1952 - DEC 30, 2025

Celebration of Life

 **Sunday**, February 15, 2026

 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM PT

 **Scappoose High School**
33589 SE High School Way, Scappoose OR
97056





Tribute Wall

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Jeff posted:

Beth always treated me so nice 🍷👍📄

January 24 at 3:51 AM



Anonymous sent a Love's Embrace Roses – Purple to the Zelfer family.



January 17 at 7:48 AM



Geralyn Yost posted:

My earliest memory of Beth was her teaching me how to tie my shoes in first grade at St. Frederic's School. Always kind and helpful.

January 17 at 3:22 AM



Debbie Wheeler posted:

Our family has been long time Zelfer fans since coming to Scappoose. Even after the kids all graduated we played countless hands of cards and loved on her cats while being treated to popcorn made in the 70 year old popper! She is greatly missed.

January 16 at 9:14 PM



Kaitlin Chikwendu posted:

Ms. Zelfer was my 4th grade teacher when I moved to Scappoose. From the very first day, her classroom brought so many of my peers and me together. I will always remember Oregon Trail and the many interactive activities she thoughtfully created for us. She carried a light of positivity that stayed with anyone who had the privilege of knowing her. She was supportive, kind, and loving, and she treated each of us as if we were her own. Her classroom was always a safe space, and her impact will never be forgotten

January 16 at 6:19 PM



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PM

Pat McLaughlin lit a candle in honor of Elizabeth.

She was loved and will always be remembered. Touched so many.

January 16 at 3:02 PM



JM

Julie Mccarter lit a candle in honor of Elizabeth.

Did not know her but, probably met her along the way somewhere at the fair. The world would be a better place if everyone cared about people, as she sounds like she did. I'm sure she's missed already.

January 16 at 11:04 AM



AG

Ann Godey February 5 at 9:16 AM

Beth and I were in the same grade in school. I remember her well from high school as we shared several classes. I have seen her over the recent years and we always had good conversations. I was fortunate to sit with her at our last class reunion and talk with her. Rest in peace Beth. You are missed. Ann Godsey

PR

Pam Reynolds January 16 at 1:59 PM

I am so sorry for your family's loss. I enjoyed working with Beth. She was an awesome teacher and a good human being! 😊❤️



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Elizabeth by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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