



Heidi Escola Haley

October 21, 1954 - July 27, 2024

Heidi Escola Haley (October 21, 1954-July 27, 2024) died peacefully at home in Fresno, CA, from complications of pancreatic cancer.

Born in Stuttgart, Germany, as the youngest of Albert and Marie Escola's four daughters, Heidi's early years were spent living in locations across the United States, Germany, and Hong Kong. Every summer the Escolas lived in their beloved vacation home in Wawona, Yosemite National Park, and the time there as well as lengthy family backpacking trips cemented Heidi's lifelong love of the Sierra Nevada mountains. She spent uncountable happy hours in and around the South Fork of the Merced River at Wawona with friends, family, and the precious canine family members who accompanied her over her seven decades of life. Sharing her deep knowledge of and love for the mountains, she also led those friends and family on unforgettable backpacking trips in the high country, and spent prolonged periods in the backcountry of Yosemite and Ansel Adams Wilderness on solo trips. Later in life she achieved her lifelong dream of building her custom-designed cabin in Wawona, where she shared meals and holiday celebrations with her local friend-family.

Her loved ones benefited from her many years of holiday baking and candy-making, and are thrilled she chose to share the recipes of her mouth-watering almond toffee, fudge, peanut brittle, and baklava with them before she died,

so they may remember her by (inexpertly) recreating them. Her joy in watching animated movies, finding new treats while shopping at Costco and Trader Joe's, getting pedicures, and walking the Meadow Loop trail in Wawona will ensure those closest to her think of her each time they partake in those activities.

A gifted teacher, and a patient, encouraging mentor, Heidi came to her field of school psychology in midlife when she finished her bachelor's degree in psychology (as first in her class) and master's degree in education at Fresno Pacific University, followed by 25 years of service to the Fresno Unified School District, including as Lead School Psychologist. She taught as an adjunct professor at FPU for many years, fostering the development of generations of Central Valley school psychologists. Despite retiring from FUSD in June 2022, Heidi continued to teach and mentor students at FPU, and saw her last class of mentees through to their graduation this year, only weeks before her death. During her illness, scores of colleagues and former students reached out to thank her for her support over the years, underscoring the incredible impact she had on so many during her career.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Albert Ronald Escola and Marie Louise (Kauffung) Escola; her stepmother Patricia (Goodman) (Mohlie) Escola; her maternal and paternal grandparents; her paternal uncle, Andrew William ("Bill") Escola; her maternal aunt Phyllis (Kauffung) (Adams) Sexton; former partner and dear friend Charles ("Chuck") Fleming; her cat Willie; and dogs Haley and Emma. She is survived by her three elder sisters, Liv Eskola of Fresno, CA, Diana (Escola) Watson of Salem, OR, and Gail (Escola) Young of Sutherlin, OR; her nieces, Liana Eskola of Madison, WI and Georgia Watson of Houston, TX; her second cousin and "forever pal" Cherie Wolfsen and second cousin once removed Bryan Wolfsen Hall, both of Fresno; cousins Toby Delaney, Owen Escola, and Andrea Gonzales; dear friends Tama Gilbert, Kelly Hawkins, Carol Johannes, Peter and Lisa Mark, Judy Harper

Dempsey, Tracy and Dave Hansen, Deeds Gill, Robin Stevens, and Diane Mello; and her loyal lap-sitting kitty companion Roxie, who has been lovingly welcomed into Cherie and Bryan's home.

Heidi's family wishes to thank the compassionate professionals who did everything they could to give Heidi more time when her disease denied her a cure; helped her manage her symptoms so she could continue to live as full and meaningful a life as possible while she was ill; and finally, helped her find spiritual comfort as she grappled with the injustice of having her life cut short. They especially appreciate Dr. Patrick MacMillan and the nurses of Hinds Hospice. Some of Heidi's final sentiments included assurances that she was not afraid to die and welcomed a peaceful and speedy transition. Her bravery and equanimity heartened those who attended to her, and they are now comforted by her freedom from suffering.

A celebration of Heidi's life will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno at 2672 E. Alluvial Ave., Fresno, CA, 93720, on November 2, 2024, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

A livestream will be available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y63WL97HQXo>.

Donations may be sent to: Wawona Friends of the Library, PO Box 2008, Wawona, CA 95389. A scholarship fund in her name is in development and further information will be available in the future.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 2. 1:00 PM (PT)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno
2672 E. Alluvial Avenue
Fresno, CA 93720

Tribute Wall

TA

“ Heidi was my sister by choice. I’m going to miss her for a long time... We had so many adventures together over the past 25 years!
Dr. Seuss says, “Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened.”

Tama - November 02, 2024 at 08:11 PM

RO

“ Heidi was a compassionate friend and upstanding professional. I am missing her friendship and kindness. She was such a hard worker and spent hours accurately evaluating each student that she assessed over the years. Heidi treated all with ultimate respect. We had a difficult situation with parents that were unhoused, sleeping in a nearby park with their child prior to sending him to school each day. When the parents were summoned into the office for a meeting, Heidi demonstrated love and kindness in her gentle way and offered them a cup of coffee. This is who Heidi was. Her life made an impact on me. I am grateful to have known and had the opportunity to work side by side such a beautiful person. Sending love to her family.....Robin Stevens

Robin - October 27, 2024 at 11:40 AM

CY

“ Missing my “Heidi- Mighty.” She was such a huge part of my life and a strong and caring friend.



Carol Yohannes - September 24, 2024 at 10:01 PM

DG

“ *Deeds Gill lit a candle in memory of Heidi Haley*



Deeds Gill - September 24, 2024 at 03:12 PM