



Tara Lee Jensen

May 10, 1969 - September 5, 2024

Tara L Jensen, age 55, lost her yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer on Thursday, September 5. She died peacefully in her home surrounded by her daughter, sister, husband and pets. The world loss a bright light and heaven gained an incredible angel. Tara is now hanging out in the clouds with her father, Dale Jensen; grandparents, Henry and Lillian Jensen, Clarence and Viola Boehmke; and cousin; Curtis Jensen. She is survived by her daughter, Petra Jensen; mother, Joanne Jensen; sister, Kimberly Jensen; husband, Marco Jensen; stepsons, Basel Al-Smadi and Amr Al-Smadi; uncle and aunt, Dean and Elaine Jensen; and cousins, Lance Jensen and Dawn Marshall (Monti Marshall), second cousins and many many friends and colleagues.

Tara graduated in 1987 from Bloomington Thomas Jefferson High School. She was a cross-country skier who joined the varsity ski team in 7th grade. She also participated in Jefferson's marching band and marched in the 1987 Rose Bowl parade. She continued her education at the University of North Dakota and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1991. Her emphasis was Meteorological Studies, and she spent many hours mentoring fellow meteorological and aviation students. Tara moved to Ft Collins where she obtained a Master of Science Degree in 1993 from Colorado State University with an emphasis in aerosol/cloud interaction. Tara went on to work on becoming a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) candidate in Cloud Physics and later Data Science with a focus on statistics, verification and machine

learning.

Tara was highly engaged and respected in the atmospheric science research community. She spent more than 30 years of her life working on the betterment of weather prediction. Tara started working as a field research scientist and concluded her career with roles at NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) as Deputy Director of the NSF NCAR node of the Developmental Testbed Center (DTC) and Project Manager III at Research Applications Laboratory (RAL). She also served the scientific community as the Chair of the American Meteorological Society Scientific and Technological Activities Commission Committee on Probability and Statistics. Tara had been instrumental in providing the driving motivation, vision and energy for the development and implementation of a verification and diagnostics framework package, Model Evaluation Tool (METplus). Thanks to Tara and her passion and commitment to METplus, it is gaining broader usage across the national and international Numerical Weather Prediction and Earth system modeling community.

Tara loved to travel both domestically and internationally, spending time with family and friends, having fun, laughing and taking photographs. Fun road trips across the country, to pro-beach volleyball tournaments, storm chasing, and into the Rocky Mountains were always highlights. As well as spending time in Ft Myers Beach at our family condo. Tara fortunately was able to work remotely, so her and her daughter moved from Colorado to Minnesota in 2022 to be closer to her mom and sister while her husband worked overseas as a DOD contractor.

Tara's piercing blue eyes and smile would light up the room. Anybody that knew Tara knows that she was incredibly strong but had a heart of gold and would help anyone in need. She tried to make a safe space for everyone and looked for the good in a person or situation. She had boundless energy, was

always positive, had great leadership and mentor skills, was inclusive, exuded empathy and a great sense of humor. Tara was very resilient even when facing her own personal challenges and coping with her cancer. She was a master of the pivot and turn. Tara was always thinking outside the box and didn't want to leave any idea or thought not considered. She never wanted to leave anything on the table if there was possibly something to leave.

Tara was an incredibly devoted mother. She dedicated as much time as humanly possible to her daughter while maintaining her passion for her work. She rarely missed any school or sports events and was always front and center cheering her on. Through her daughters up and downs she was always very patient, supportive and loving. Always encouraging her daughter to believe in herself, be kind to herself and love herself as she is. Tara showed her daughter the world.

She loved her family immensely and recently posted on her daughter's birthday, she wanted to start a fundraiser for the National Pancreas Foundation to help research pancreas disease and early detection of pancreatic cancer, so that others can enjoy their families as long as they can. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the National Pancreas Foundation at pancreasfoundation.org

A memorial service will be held at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, 5025 Knox Ave S, Minneapolis, on Monday, September 16 at 100pm (CT). There will be a visitation one-hour prior beginning at 1200n (CT) and a small reception at the church following the service. We have also set up a livestream for all her family, friends, and colleagues throughout the world. The link is <https://mtolive.t.org/live-on-sundays/>

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **16.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (So. Mpls)
5025 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Memorial Service

SEP **16.** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (So. Mpls)
5025 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Tribute Wall



“ *My name is Don Lukkason. I am a cousin to Tara’s mother Joanne and grew up across the hill from her grandparents Clarence and Viola.*

I heard many times Joanne speak of sister Kim and Tara with great pride. My sympathy to mother Joanne and sister Kim.

Don

Don Lukkason - November 19, 2024 at 01:10 AM

WH

“ *I didn't know Tara personally just professionally and unfortunately we never met in person.*

She was helping me with computer coding issues remotely over the past several years above and beyond her job description at NCAR.

I really appreciated all the times I got to work with her and her willingness to help. This is a very sad loss but at least she is not suffering anymore and is in a better place.

You will be missed Tara and thank you for everything you have done to help me over the years.

Will H - September 18, 2024 at 07:41 PM

DN

“ *Thinking of you all today as you celebrate memories of your mom, sister, wife, friend, daughter, and loved one! Tara was strong and always there for others. Prayers of peace for you all.*

DaNell Tucker - neighbor - September 16, 2024 at 10:55 AM

JW

“ Jean W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tara Lee Jensen.

Jean W. - September 16, 2024 at 09:24 AM

AO

“ Ashley O. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tara Lee Jensen.

Ashley O. - September 12, 2024 at 09:49 PM

AT

“ Amy Parkin and Tina Taggart purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Tara Lee Jensen.



Amy Parkin and Tina Taggart - September 12, 2024 at 08:30 PM