



Heather LaVerne Watson

November 2, 1965 - November 6, 2021

Heather LaVerne Watson, 56, passed November 6, 2021. She is the beloved sister of Michelle Watson (David) and Carrol Watson Hassad-Gosnee (Stephen Gosnell); aunt of Aaron Hassad. Relatives and friends may gather at Jefferson Funeral Chapel, 5755 Castlewellan Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22315 on Friday, November 12 from 3-7PM

Previous Events

Family Gathering

NOV **12**. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Jefferson Funeral Chapel
5755 Castlewellan Drive
Alexandria, VA 22315
(703) 971-7400
info@jeffersonfuneralchapel.com
<https://www.jeffersonfuneralchapel.com>

Tribute Wall



“ So very sad to learn of Heather's passing. The world lost a fine person. She was my Ph.D. student at New Mexico State University, and a very good one at that. She also became a friend. Reading the tributes here shows she was friend to many and will not be forgotten.

Ian Leslie - February 10, 2023 at 08:10 AM



“ *Heather LaVerne Watson*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear of Heather's passing. She was a wonderful colleague at NSF, always keeping her nose to the grindstone yet also sharing her experiences and travels. We are blessed for having known her.*

Stephanie E. August - October 21, 2022 at 12:06 PM



“ *I was so looking forward to meeting Heather this January at the AAS meeting. In our email conversations she was so warm and unassuming, yet so expert and reassuring. I'm so sorry she is no longer with us. She is in my thoughts and I send my deepest sympathy to her family.*

Jeremy Drake - November 22, 2021 at 12:03 PM

SB

“ *I was very saddened to hear of Heather's passing. She was sweet, kind, gentle, and super smart! She contributed much to NSF and to field. She will be greatly missed but she leaves a legacy of hard work.*

Sylvia Margaret Butterfield - November 14, 2021 at 06:58 PM

CL

“ *My tribute to my dear friend Heather.*

.....
forget how affectionate she was toward my little family
(even the dog) or how proud she was of my daughter's
recent accomplishments. I won't ever forget our weekly
phone conversations and I will think of her every single
Saturday at 11:00 a.m. Starting this year, it will be a new
tradition in my family to make a Jamaican nut cake in
her honor. I hope we made it clear just how much we
loved her. This photo has us both raising a glass to
friendship. I'm so fortunate that I was blessed by her.



Charla Lorenzen - November 12, 2021 at 10:41 PM

DH

“*Heather was a wonderful friend and person. She was so accomplished (PhD, Engineer, college professor, researcher, NSF, NASA employee) and yet so humble and relatable. I will greatly miss her.*

We were both new to Harrisonburg when we met, and we quickly became friends as we laughed about using Mary Kay while we were at a Avon party. She taught me how to crochet, and we enjoyed trying out all the happy hour specials at different restaurants and getting specialty cupcakes. We also shared a love of finding bargains while shopping. She had such an upbeat personality and her laugh would brighten any conversation, even when discussing the trials of teaching. I will miss our conversations and will always remember all of our shared times and conversations together, especially when I use and wear the many things she would make and give me (blankets, scarfs, jewelry). May God comfort her family and friends as we miss such a sweet, accomplished, and talented woman.

Darci Hendrickson - November 12, 2021 at 09:30 PM

DJ

“*I am truly heartbroken to hear of Heather's passing. We both joined the NSF as fellows of the AAAS STP fellowship program back in 2016 and share some great memories together. She was so kind, hard working and always in good spirit. it was a blessing to have known Heather and she will be missed dearly. My deepest condolences to the Watson family, may God comforts you all in this time of sorrow.*

Daphney Jean - November 12, 2021 at 07:43 PM

DE

“ *My sincere condolences to Heather's family. She was a much-loved and respected member of the NASA family, and we all share with you an enormous sense of loss.*

Dan Evans - November 12, 2021 at 07:38 PM

DM

“ *I am deeply saddened and shocked to learn of Heather's passing. She was a dear colleague who could always be counted on for a much needed laugh and friendly "Hello". She cared enough to "care enough" -- taking time to drop by and offer an encouraging word when needed, or just to engage in small talk. She took her job seriously, but never took herself too seriously, and I appreciated her for that unique quality.*



I am blessed and grateful to have known Heather, and offer my deepest sympathy and condolences to the Watson Family; may she rest in perfect peace.

Daphne A. Marshall - November 12, 2021 at 01:00 PM

TS

“ *Heather was one of the first people I met with I joined NSF in 2017. I am deeply saddened to hear this news. She was a great person and a highlight of many days as I transitioned into NSF and EHR. She gave incredibly helpful advice and often made me laugh as we ate lunch together, had hallway conversations, and shared stories and experiences. She is and will be greatly missed.*

Tori Smith - November 12, 2021 at 12:38 PM

D(

“ Daphne A. Marshall & Darnita Kizer (NSF) purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Heather LaVerne Watson.



Daphne A. Marshall & Darnita Kizer (NSF) - November 12, 2021 at 12:16 PM

AN

“ As luck would have it, Heather and I started as program officers at the NSF on the same day and were assigned offices next to one another. Over the years we learned together, laughed regularly, shared stories, and ratcheted up one another’s love of chocolate.

Heather had so many qualities to love and admire. She was entirely committed to improving undergraduate education and supporting projects that provided opportunities for STEM learners. Her work ethic was matched only by her strong sense of fairness. All the while, she had a very clear work/life boundary.

Heather challenged conventional wisdom when she found it lacking - nowhere more so than in critiques of the “leaky pipeline” model used to explain STEM student retention. She thought that line of thinking did little to actually improve learning environments. Similarly, she demanded rigorous research and assessment plans that, again, were designed to benefit learners and push the boundaries of what we know about STEM learning and learning environments.

When the NSF moved locations, we made sure to request offices next to one another so that our daily conversations (and laughter and hijinks) could continue. Like so many others, I hoped that those conversations would continue over the years.

Andrea Nixon - November 12, 2021 at 12:00 PM

PK

“ Heather and I were introduced virtually by a mutual friend, Jess, knowing we both had connections with NSF and were both trying to chart the next chapter in our lives. We corresponded over email for over a year, always trying to set up a time to meet, and never managing to do so due to our busy schedules. Then I was delighted to find out that we were both officially hired to be Program Scientists in the NASA Astrophysics Division! (I had already been there for three years on a temporary assignment from NSF.) I was delighted when our boss asked me to be Heather's mentor, and she became my Deputy in the 2019 Explorers Step-2 review. Heather was so quick, witty, and eager to learn and participate. Her engineering background was really valuable during the Step-2 review, and I could always count on her to spot something I had missed. We tagged up at least once a week, and so often what we talked about had nothing to do with work, but more about the challenges we had faced in our careers and what we were looking forward to in the future. I will miss her valuable contributions, but more, I will miss her. She was an amazing person.

Patricia Knezek - November 12, 2021 at 11:55 AM

EE

“ I am saddened to hear about Heather's passing. She was a gentle and caring soul who gave so much. I pray that the family is strengthened and comforted by the expressions of love and support from all of us.

Earnestine Easter
Division of Graduate Education

Earnestine Easter - November 12, 2021 at 11:14 AM

GV

“ I always knew I could count on Heather to put a smile on my face and come up with an on point, quick-witted comment. From chatting about things like the best deals at BJ's wholesale, new craft projects, memories of travels in Norway, and her dissertation on heat transfer loops, we never lacked something to "yack" about. I also admired Heather's ability to take stock of a situation and not get bogged down—an outlook that I will remember to use in the future. Heather enriched my life and brought joy, I will miss her more than I can put into words but remain grateful that our paths crossed.



Glenda Valdez - November 12, 2021 at 11:09 AM

MP

“ My sincere condolences to Heather’s family in this moment of loss and farewell. Heather served for the last year as a member of the NASA Astrophysics Technology team. We will miss her enthusiastic participation and contributions to this group, which unfortunately during this time were limited to the virtual world of remote teleworking. Even during these short months she was respected for her technical experience, optimism, balance and congenial personality. She faced her health challenges with dignity, courage and hope. My regret is that I never met her in person. She will be missed by all of us!

Mario Perez - November 12, 2021 at 11:08 AM

NH

“ Nabriya Horton and Jasmine Hill purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Heather LaVerne Watson.



Nabriya Horton and Jasmine Hill - November 12, 2021 at 10:56 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Heather LaVerne Watson.



November 12, 2021 at 10:18 AM

NE

“ NSF Division of Undergraduate Education purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Heather LaVerne Watson.



NSF Division of Undergraduate Education - November 12, 2021 at 09:10 AM

SI

“ Heather's positive and inquisitive personality made the brief period I was privileged to work with her such a joy! During our weekly video chats she was always full of energy and curiosity, had a positive outlook on life, and she always wanted to learn new things. Even though we only knew each other for about one year and only met once in person, she welcomed me into her life by sharing many personal stories about her upbringing and family. I will forever miss her infectious smile and laugh!

Stefan Immler - November 12, 2021 at 09:03 AM

MG

“ I really enjoyed working with Heather at NASA, and am sorry that we were never able to meet face to face. She very ably took over the SmallSats Study program from me, dealt with all the people who were doing the studies, and set up a special session at the upcoming American Astronomical Society for all those people to present their results. She was always upbeat, and willing and able to help out. I will miss her a lot.

-Mike Garcia

michael garcia - November 12, 2021 at 08:56 AM

TK

“ I am heartbroken at the news of Heather's passing. She was a dear colleague during our time together at NSF and we became drinking buddies once we discovered a shared love of bourbon. She was always such a joy to be with. Always the right combination of cheer and sass! I loved her no-nonsense attitude and we always knew we could dish to each other when either of us got into preposterous situations. I will miss her dearly. I hope that her family can find solace in these joyful memories of Heather's life. I will be holding those memories close to my heart, for sure.

Tom Kim - November 12, 2021 at 07:38 AM

Kartik
Sheth

“ I never met Heather in person but I feel like I knew her well and will greatly miss our regular tag ups. She was always so inquisitive and always positive about everything - she regarded everything with such charitable interpretation that it was hard to ever feel down for more than a few minutes in a conversation with her. Heather joined our NASA team about a year ago and we immediately clicked. Her incredible experience in academia and government and her engineering expertise was ideal and I always thought she would be our next chief technologist. I never thought that the last time I spoke to her in September would be my last conversation as I made my transition to a new detail - always thought when I came back to NASA and we were all finally allowed to be in the building, I would greatly enjoy working with Heather instead of the flaky Teams connection we always fought with.



-Kartik

Kartik Sheth - November 11, 2021 at 11:23 PM

CL

“ Heather was beloved by many at Elizabethtown College. She will be forever remembered by her close friend Charla Lorenzen & her family, the faculty and staff in the Engineering program, those who traveled to Iceland with her, and others who remember her as a charismatic and intellectual faculty member. She made a lasting impression at Etown and will be missed.

Charla Lorenzen - November 11, 2021 at 09:50 PM

AM

“ Heather was a dear colleague at NSF and a wonderful person to share work with. A perfectionist, smart and hard worker engineering professor at heart. She was always ready to listen and share any concerns and celebrate achievements with her coworkers. I am saddened with her passing and hope her family finds comfort remembering her smile and fruitful life.

Alexandra Medina-Borja

Alexandra Medina-Borja - November 11, 2021 at 07:47 PM

EM

It was always a pleasure to share a smile with Heather. How I enjoyed working with her. She has been missed since she left NSF for NASA and now she will be missed even more.

Ellen McCallie - November 11, 2021 at 07:51 PM

MS

Heather's passing is a great loss to many. Condolences especially to her family and new coworkers at NASA. At NSF she was known for her steady and pleasant personality, and her reliability as a professional. Her many contributions to projects and perspectives in efforts in EHR will be remembered as well.

MJ Suiter, HRD

MJ SUITER - November 12, 2021 at 11:39 AM

OP

“ Heather was a dear friend to me and my family. I have so many memories of her strolling my oldest son around the neighborhood in Harrisonburg, each of us holding my twin boys, being joyful when my daughter arrived. She was part of every key milestone in my family's life. Her smile was infectious and her character a model for all. I will miss her dearly and she will forever be in our memories. Praying for her family during this sad time.

Olga Pierrakos - November 11, 2021 at 06:56 PM



“ *A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of Heather LaVerne Watson.*



November 11, 2021 at 05:34 PM



“ *Thinking of Heather's laugh and dry wit.... and remembering this very bright young woman (anyone younger than me is young.....).*

So happy I got to know her as more than just Michelle's little sister.

Love to you Mish, David and all those who will miss her.

Love, Gina

Gina Sanguinetti Phillips - November 11, 2021 at 04:19 PM