

Patricia Jean Hartl was born October 18, 1952, in New Rockford. The fourth and middle child of seven born to Lillie and Vincent Hartl, Patricia grew up on the farm southwest of New Rockford, in a family known for welcoming guests and big family gatherings.

Patty met Leslie Wagner of Carrington in high school, and the couple were married September 18, 1971, leaving the next day for Seattle, WA. They lived there three years while Les began his college studies, then returned to ND, living over the years in Ellendale, Valley City, McClusky, and New Rockford. Patty studied and worked as a veterinary tech, law office secretary, and several other career changes before settling on education later in life.

In 1978, Patty and Les welcomed their first child, Benjamin. Patty's lifelong dream of motherhood became her greatest joy, added to in 1984 with the birth of their daughter, Jessica. Patty stayed home with her children in their early years, reading books, playing games, and forming close bonds of love and friendship with both of them.

The Wagner family lived for many years in McClusky, where both Pat and Les worked at the school, and formed many deep friendships. During this time, Pat returned to college at Minot State University, earning her degree in Elementary Education. She began her teaching career at South Prairie School, near Minot, followed by Goodrich Elementary School. She began teaching at New Rockford-Sheyenne School in 2001, where she stayed and taught 4th, 5th, and 6th grades through the current school year.

In 2000, Pat and family moved back to the Hartl farm near New Rockford to help care for Patty's mother, Lillie. She became a grandmother four times, welcoming her favorite people on earth, Ben's children Roxy, Evelyn, Ava, and Killian. Les passed away suddenly in 2005, and Patty stayed at the farm with Lillie until recent years, when Lillie took residence at the Lutheran Home in town. In 2010 Pat was joined at the farm by her daughter Jessica and her husband Case, who loved every minute of their time living together, and helped care for Pat through her illness and treatments.

Throughout her life, the constant theme of Patty's world was family - close ties with her siblings, devoted to her parents, selflessly giving to her children, a favorite among nieces, nephews, and cousins, and the model of love and kindness to her grandchildren.

Patty enjoyed family trips, going three times to Disneyland and once to Spain. She played hostess to countless family holidays and birthdays, waking early to flip pancakes and do crossword puzzles with her kids and sister Renee, and staying up late to play cards and tell stories with her brothers and nephews. She was an avid reader of the sciences and mystery novels, and an aficionado of cheesy sci-fi movies. She loved animals, nature, good food, weekend visits from Ben, his wife Caitie, and the grandkids, and "playing farmer" with her brothers Tim and Tom during harvest.

Pat had a way of bringing calm to her classroom and colleagues, and sparking interest in her students. She encouraged children to accept others with kindness, and to be comfortable with their own uniqueness and individuality. She loved her school family as well, her fellow teachers and classroom aides, and took her students into her heart. Her gratitude for the care and support of the entire school was profound and humble.

Supported by her sister Lois, daughter Jessica, sister-in-law Dawn, and family and friends near and far, Patty began her battle with cancer in 2014. She faced each obstacle head-on with grace and quiet bravery, maintaining her gentle spirit and good humor to the end. Patricia passed away peacefully in Fargo on March 11, 2016, at the age of 63. Her presence will be deeply missed by everyone in her life, but the memories she made with us will warm our hearts forever.