



Jeanice Ruth Hays

September 24, 1951 - March 6, 2026

Following a lengthy battle with bone cancer, Jeanice Ruth (Zimmerman) Hays of Jacksonville, IL passed away Friday, Mar. 6, 2026, at The Grove Health & Rehab Center. She was born Sept. 24, 1951, in Manito, the daughter of Oron Oscar and Marian Ruth (Endicott) Zimmerman. She married Joel Michial Hays and together they had two sons.

In her lifetime, Jeanice was a fountain of creativity, winning dozens of awards for her artistry in baking, Fimo sculpting, and painting. She delighted in participating in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) during her years in New Mexico, and was famous for sharing her homemade donuts at events. She also earned a 3rd degree black belt at Kim's Tae Kwon Do studio in Farmington, NM, going on to develop her own martial arts classes for young children. Jeanice also had a big heart for animals, and had many pets over the years, most recently, her two cats Mimi and PITA. Her favorite place to call home was Key Largo, FL, where she and Joel raised their young sons on a houseboat, before moving across the country to New Mexico.

Surviving are sons, Erin (Margaret) Bergren of WI and Shan (Nicole) Hays of NM; grandchildren, Kayla Hays, Roan Bergren, Miriam Bergren, Astrid Bergren, Jeanice Gustamonte, Stetson Hays, and Cade (Ben) Connors; great-grandchildren, Lyla Gustamonte, Liam Gustamonte, Colton Dillon, Steven Dillon, Ronin Dillon, and Percy Connors; siblings, Conrad Zimmerman, Oron

Zimmerman Jr., Phyllis Freeman and Karla Edwards, and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by ex-husband Joel Hays, and grandson Callum Hays.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that donations be made to Cass County Animal Rescue, 101 Sangamon, Beardstown, IL 62618.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Daws Family Funeral Home in Jacksonville is assisting the family.