



## Fern Adele Lawler

July 22, 1951 - January 16, 2025

Fern Lawler passed away peacefully at Pathways Hospice Facility surrounded by those she loved the most on January 16, 2025. Despite living with ALS for the last 4 years of her life, her attitude always remained outward focused, loving those around her, and always putting others before herself, even in her final days.

Fern was born on July 22, 1951 in Rock Rapids, Iowa. She was the only daughter with 2 older brothers and one younger brother. Fern grew up on a farm where she learned the value of hard work and shared responsibility. Her family attended the First Reformed Church and they remained an active part of the faith community. She also attended Rock Rapids High School and enjoyed student government and played the saxophone in the band. Fern loved track and field but could not compete with her High School because girls' sports were not available. Fern took it upon herself to hire a private track coach so she could compete independently at other area high school track and field meets.

After High School, Fern attended John F Kennedy college for one year in Nebraska where she ran collegiate track. She then transferred her sophomore year to Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa and continued on with collegiate track and where she met the love her life Dan Lawler. Fern was the 1971 Homecoming Queen and maintained an exceptional academic career.

After college Fern taught and coached the girls' track team at Ames High School in Ames, Iowa and shortly thereafter, she attended Iowa State University to earn her Masters and Ph.D. in Psychology. While Fern was finishing her Ph.D program at Iowa State she gave birth to her daughter Amanda, who was her greatest gift. Fern's career really took off when she took a teaching position at Colorado State University in the Psychology Department, which then led to her starting her own private practice.

Fern's greatest passion and calling from the Lord was to walk with others through life's ups and downs. As a psychologist, there are an untold number of people who sat in front of Fern and received her love, guidance, compassion, and wisdom, through some of life's most difficult circumstances. She was a confidant, steady voice, advocate, and safe space for countless individuals who will never forget Fern's impact on their lives.

Fern was someone who exuded generosity in the time she gave others, the talent she contributed as a therapist, and her financial contributions to so many different philanthropic organizations and individuals in need.

Fern always loved spending time with her family, friends, watching sports, and spending time outdoors. She liked to hike in the Colorado mountains. She also enjoyed her various book clubs with some of her dearest friends.

Fern was preceded in death by brothers, Victor Van Wyhe and Galen Van Wyhe. She is also preceded by her Mother, Henrietta Van Wyhe, and Father Vernon Van Wyhe.

She is survived by the following, who will remember her as: a faithful and devoted wife to Dan Lawler, a loving Mother to Amanda Buenger (Jess) and Jonathan Woodward (Jessica), an adoring "Nana" to her four granddaughters

Addison, Ariella, Olivia and Brooke, and adopted grandson Nick, and adopted granddaughter Lainey. Her grandchildren were her source of deepest joy. Fern will also be remembered as a precious Sister, Sister-in-Law, Aunt, friend, and colleague.

A visitation will be held 5-7pm, Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at Bohlender Funeral Chapel. A celebration of life will be held 10 am, Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at Timberline Church, South Auditorium, 2908 S. Timberline Rd. The graveside service will follow at 2 pm at Resthaven Memory Gardens Cemetery. The celebration of life may be viewed at <https://youtube.com/live/swBJA0Z0Za8?feature=share>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 28. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel  
121 W. Olive Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

## Celebration of Life

JAN 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

Timberline Church  
2908 S. Timberline Rd.  
Fort Collins, CO 80525

*The celebration of life may be viewed at <https://youtube.com/live/swBJA0Z0Za8?feature=share>*

## Graveside Service

JAN 29. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

Resthaven Memory Gardens Cemetery  
8426 S. College Ave.  
Fort Collins, CO 80525

# Tribute Wall

LS

“ Fern helped me through the most challenging decade of my life. Always compassionate and wise yet honest and called me on my sh-t. Also so funny too. Lots of laughs beyond the tears sitting on the couch in her Peterson St office. I'll never forget her she was a remarkable person who made a huge difference in my life and how I lived it thanks to her insights and advice, and indirectly helped the lives of my 3 then young kids I was trying to raise well on my own. It was an honor to know her.

Lauren S. - March 03 at 02:33 PM

KI

“ This is sad news. Fern was a very dedicated and compassionate therapist to me. So sorry for your loss.

Kiffany - July 22, 2025 at 01:30 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Fern Adele Lawler.



June 03, 2025 at 02:06 PM

KW

“ Fern was my high school PE teacher and Track coach at Ames High School. She cared so much for her students. She was tough because she wanted us to be the best that we could be. I am so appreciative of that. We girls loved her and were very fond of her, and of course, we thought she was so pretty. She is truly a very special person.

I was so grateful to reconnect with her and be friends after college, when Dan hired me to be one of his teachers at Ballard Elementary School.

The world is a much better place because of Fern. ❤️

You are with Jesus, Fern, and that's makes me smile.

xoxo



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**Kim Wierson** - January 30, 2025 at 04:28 PM

BS

“ I have been the only male member in a book club with Fern for about 18 years. I call us the token male book club. Fern was wonderfully insightful about the various books. I learned so much from her and appreciated her presence more than I can say. She always had insightful things to say about the books. Always gracious, always spoke her mind. She also knew my wife, Vicki, because we would meet at each other's houses about six or seven times per year. We will both miss her. A shining light in our lives.  
Bill Slye and Vicki Lutz

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**Bill Slye** - January 28, 2025 at 06:54 PM

MB

“ *Marilyn Bradley lit a candle in memory of Fern Adele Lawler*



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**Marilyn Bradley** - January 28, 2025 at 07:36 AM

MB

*I loved Fern with all my heart. She was the best therapist. I knew her for 20 years. I am so sorry for your loss and feel that loss so much. Hugs to all of you.*

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**Marilyn Bradley** - January 28, 2025 at 07:38 AM

DL

“ *David & Shawn Leland lit a candle in memory of Fern Adele Lawler*



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**David & Shawn Leland** - January 26, 2025 at 07:11 PM

SS

“ *Sorry to hear of your loss. Sounds like she brought comfort to herself and others. Peace be with all of you. Suzie Smith*

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**suzie Smith** - January 25, 2025 at 04:41 PM

SK

“ I first met Fern at a professional psychotherapy workshop in Kent Connecticut approximately thirty years ago. We have been friends and colleagues ever since. Fern’s source of joy was to facilitate the growth, happiness, success of those she cared about; she came so fully alive when engaging whether therapeutically, competitively or through humor and play. She used every bit and every drop of herself because to engage so well and fully with others filled her up to the brim. She continued to care deeply for all of us even through her ALS journey and she allowed us to care for her. I consider myself blessed to have known her and lucky as what are the odds that a person from White Rock, BC Canada would meet Fern from Fort Collins Co? Fern was remarkable. I miss her deeply.

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**Sandra Knight** - January 23, 2025 at 12:58 PM

MR

There are not enough words in the English language to describe how amazing Fern was. She could bring humour and make me laugh like no other and I loved the sound of her laughter, as her mirth showed in her smile and the twinkled in her eyes . It was contagious . She was so highly intelligent and yet that wasn't the marvel , it was that she was also so wise.

For 4 1/2 years after the surgery that almost cost her life, a group of us friends text with Fern every day. This was created to support Fern, but it was soon obvious her support of us would be predominant! Our group mentored together for 20 years and when we gathered Fern gave jewelry gifts, that I will wear remembering her and her generosity ! Fern shared her adoration for grand kids , daughter, son, and husband... and this channel will come to an end too ☐

How do I say goodbye to Fern, who I daily engaged , with tears of sorrow ☐

I Love you Fern!

Maxine Reidel

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**maxine Reidel** - January 25, 2025 at 01:56 PM

SH

*I worked at Lopez Elementary School as a Paraprofessional for many years. I came to know Fern when she came in to volunteer in her daughter, Amanda's class. She was always such a sweet, positive, upbeat person and I enjoyed getting to know her in the school's "workroom". I was so sorry to hear of her passing! I read her obituary....what an accomplished lady she was!*

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**Suzanne Hurd** - February 07, 2025 at 01:10 PM

SF

“ *A.L.S. is a cruel disease, but Fern lived her life as though every day was a blessing! Who do you know who could do that? No one else I have ever known.*

*Dan's physical strength, devotion and deep love for Fern made it possible for Fern to remain at home till the final stage of ALS... miracle of all miracles those two produced!*

*I am Canadian, living in another country, yet my bond with Fern was an example of how she could deeply connect with her amazing heart and intelligent, funny, personality. I consider her my best friend! I know this 'board8 would have hundreds of entries once her passing is known more.*

*I love you, now and forever, Flirty! 🙏🏻👩🏻💜*

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**Shirley Fleming** - January 22, 2025 at 11:26 AM

MM

“ Dan, I'm so sorry to hear of Fern's passing. I always enjoyed talking with Vic and then you and Fern about the rental house you owned next to us. Fern and I liked to talk healthcare and when you two remodeled the house she was so excited to show me the changes. Fern always had a positive energy about her. She and I talked about how it was getting to difficult to keep up the rental because of her ALS and once it sold she text me to thank me for always being such a good neighbor. She never got down about it, it was just a matter of fact. She will be remembered as a kind and gentle spirit who helped so many people through her work. I feel truly blessed to have known her.

Melissa McCann-Stoeckle

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Melissa McCann-Stoeckle - January 20, 2025 at 10:42 PM

TY

“ Fern was my savior. I was blessed to be her client for 11 special years. Her care and warmth helped me rise above my past. Rest in peace Fern. Blessings to her beloved family.

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ty youke - January 20, 2025 at 03:29 PM

SP

“ I had the great fortune of teaching with Fern for 8 beautiful years at Ames High School. She was not only a wonderful team player as a teacher in our physical education department, she was also always there to provide whatever support I needed. While our next careers took us in very different directions, I have always cherished the time I was able to work with this amazing and caring person. Rest in peace dear friend. Suzanne Pepin (aka Suzy Kruse)

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Suzanne Pepin - January 20, 2025 at 01:49 PM

KI

“ My life was forever changed by Fern. Her loving guidance helped me create a deep and meaningful marriage with my husband of 35 years and find the courage to bring two beautiful daughters into this world. I am so deeply honored to have known her. Fern emanated a light that will live on in all those she touched. She was truly a gift to this world.

Kim Iwanski - January 20, 2025 at 11:25 AM

DD

“ Sweet, kind, thoughtful, giving, generous beautiful, that was Fern. I will forever miss this beautiful soul with a heart of gold.

Deb Drake - January 20, 2025 at 10:14 AM

PT

“ We always enjoyed having Fern, Dan, and Amanda as our neighbors. Her kindness will definitely be missed.

Phil Trippet - January 19, 2025 at 02:22 PM

PS

Dear Dan and Amanda, no words can express fully the void our world feels with Fern not in it. She absolutely saved my life with her wisdom and guidance at a time when my children and I were grieving the early death of my husband, their Dad. May her memory always be a blessing to you and your family and friends.

Pamela Sachs-Kapp - January 19, 2025 at 03:33 PM

RC

“ Fern was a gift...to me in a time of need and to this existence. Her spirit will live on in the hearts of everyone she supported and loved. Missing you already...xo

Rene' Clements - January 18, 2025 at 08:44 PM

SS

“ *Staci Shaffer lit a candle in memory of Fern Adele Lawler*



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**Staci Shaffer** - January 18, 2025 at 07:33 PM

MD

“ *The life of a sweet lady taken way too soon. I'll always remember how she and Dan treated as if we were family. Rest in peace dear friend.*

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**Mike Davis** - January 17, 2025 at 02:29 PM

MC

“ *1 file added to the album Fern in Iowa*

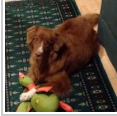


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**Michelle Coady** - January 17, 2025 at 09:28 AM

MC

*Soon after college graduation, Fern started teaching and coaching at Ames High School, in Ames, Iowa. She was an outstanding addition to the faculty and an amazingly talented coach. She led by example. She was missed as she moved on for advanced degrees, marriage to Dan and her amazing life. Memories of you are cherished as you meet your maker. Rest in Peace. Michelle*

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**Michelle Coady** - January 17, 2025 at 09:32 AM



*As one of Fern's athletes at Ames High, I also have good memories. My thoughts and prayers are with all who love you, Fern. Rest in peace.*

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**Susan Deppe** - January 17, 2025 at 10:01 PM

RL

*Our hearts go out to Dan, Amanda and their family. Fern was a huge gift to many. The world has lost a kind and passionate individual who will be sorely missed. Deep peace to you all.  
Ruth and Bruce Lieurance*

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**Ruth Lieurance** - January 19, 2025 at 10:50 PM

JB

*Dan and Amanda. My deepest condolences and sympathy to you for your loss of wife and mother. Dan, you and your wife, Fern and daughter Amanda were very a very special family to me while we were coaching the Buckaroos. God Bless. Jerry*

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**Jerry Brumit** - January 22, 2025 at 12:04 PM

DB

*Fern saved my life and gave me life. I loved her deeply and will always be grateful to have had her in my life.*

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**Denise Boehm** - January 22, 2025 at 03:44 PM

KC

*Fern was my first and best friend growing up. There was never a time I did not know her. We had so much fun growing up together, our families were close. As the story goes, her dad made a 10 mile trip to tell my dad, "George, I got a girl". He was over the moon. As our lives drifted apart I always thought of her and missed her. My regret is not picking up the phone and sharing our lives. I know how that conversation would have gone tho, just were we left off. My deepest sympathy Dan and Amanda. I know how you will miss her.*

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**Karen Caswell** - May 28, 2025 at 07:58 PM

LA

*Fern was, hands down, the best therapist I have ever had. Her kindness, encouragement, and care all helped me heal and grow. I had been looking for a way to reconnect and am so sorry for your loss. She was an incredibly special lady and talented psychologist. She was a blessing to all of us, and continues to be as we remember her wisdom, intelligence, and compassion. May her memory be a blessing.*

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**Laura** - July 02, 2025 at 10:48 AM