



Karen Elizabeth Kahler

October 22, 1962 - May 24, 2026

Karen Elizabeth Kahler (nee Nelson) passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 24, 2026 at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, CO from GIST, a rare abdominal cancer. Karen was born and raised in Concord, MA and graduated from Concord Carlisle High School in 1980. She graduated from Connecticut College in New London, CT in 1984 and earned her MBA at the University of Colorado in Boulder, CO in 1992. Karen earned her CPA from the State of Maryland in 2003.

Karen married CAPT Evan Quain Kahler, a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, in 1984. Throughout his military career, they spent the next twenty-four years moving to and exploring various cities and towns across the United States making wonderful friendships along the way. While living in Kodiak, AK, they welcomed their two sons, Robert N. Kahler and James N. Kahler, both currently of Albuquerque, NM. In 2008, they all settled in Fort Collins, CO.

While moving around the country, Karen worked as an auditor for several agencies. She found her professional home after moving to Fort Collins and was the Manager of Financial Operations for the Chemistry Department at Colorado State University for over fifteen years. She enjoyed taking family trips to new locations, visiting family members in New Mexico, Oregon, and Louisiana, and getting together with lifelong friends Susan and John Norton.

She loved going to the theater, trying new restaurants, and having lunch out with family and friends. Karen relaxed at home with jigsaw puzzles and cozy mysteries.

Karen is preceded in death by her parents, Raymond Ryder Nelson and Nan Harp Schmalz Nelson. She is survived by her husband, CAPT Evan Quain Kahler; children Robert Kahler (Anna) and James Kahler; brothers Alan Nelson (Laura) and Keith Nelson (Nina); sister-in-law Sharolyn Lewis; and brother-in-law Christopher Kahler (Renee).

A grave side service will be held at the Santa Fe National Cemetery in New Mexico at a later date.

Memorial gifts may be given to the UC Health Northern Colorado Foundation in appreciation for the excellent care Karen received during her illness. <https://www.uhealthnocofoundation.org/donate/>