

Chances

By Laura Leikness

He sits alone on the cold park bench, waiting.
People come and go, aware of his presence
But not showing it.
To them, the old man is just that—
An old man.
No one gives him a chance.

A squirrel scuttles through the dry October leaves,
Darting across the path, searching for a friend.
He curiously sniffs the old man's shoe,
Inspecting him for a slight bit of friendship.
The old man peers down at the tiny creature.
We're two of a kind, he sadly thinks,
Unimportant to society.
He extends a peanut to his new-found friend.
The squirrel glances upward at the old man,
Its whiskers quivering and tail twitching.
He scampers away.
The old man looks away into the distance.
He wasn't given a chance.

Two teenagers stroll by hand in hand.
The old man gazes wistfully at the couple.
And remembers those days.
His first love was a ten-year-old tomboy—
Freckles, red hair, and a catcher's mitt.
Then came the blonde cheerleader when he was 18.
Those promises spoken between them
For their future. But they were never kept,
And he never had another love.
He looks away from the happy couple.
He never had a chance.

He loves children,
But no one knows.
Mothers whisk their curious children away from him.
"Don't talk to strangers."
These few words echo through his mind.
Why must people isolate their feelings toward others?
"If you love someone, let him know it," he always thought.
If only people would do that...
Tears come to his tired eyes
The old man looks away from the puzzled children.
No one gives him a chance.

So he sits alone on the cold park bench,
His personality locked inside himself.
If people would only stop, talk to him.
Maybe then his life would be different.
No more cold park benches.
Only warmth,
A kind of warmth that comes from the love of others.
Only warmth,
A kind of warmth that comes from the love of others.
A feeling he has forgotten
Simply because of uncaring individuals
Who never gave him a chance.



Celebration of Life

Saturday, September 10, 2022 ~ 2:00 p.m.
Carlín Family Funeral Home
Fosston, Minnesota

Memories and Readings

Pat Scholar
Austin Bergquist
Jonathan Kortés
(Reading on behalf of Joe)
Tony Trout



The poem "Chances" was written as part of an assignment in Senior English in 1984. It was entered in the "Literary Calvalcade's 1984 National Scholastic Writing Awards competition.

Carlín
FAMILY FUNERAL SERVICE

Laura was born August 31, 1965 to Lois (Hasselton) and Leigh “Corky” Leikness in Fosston, MN. She attended school in Fosston, MN where she was active in volleyball, golf, basketball, and playing the trumpet in band. She graduated from Fosston in 1984.

After graduation, she attended Moorhead State and then Moorhead Vo-Tech, graduating in 1986 with a degree in dental assisting. She worked in the dental field for 20 years, starting in Fargo and then in Bismarck, ND.

She was united in marriage to Kyle Bergquist in 1992. To that union was born Austin Leigh in 1994 and Paige Marie in 2000. In June 2014 Laura married Joe Kortes and they moved to Fargo, ND where she worked for Biolife Plasma Services.

Laura had a great love of animals, especially Yorkies. She loved baking and treating her coworkers to amazing desserts. She had a passion for selling things on Ebay, gardening, sitting around a fire, and fishing with Joe. Her greatest passion in life though was spending time with family. She eagerly looked forward to each visit from Austin and Paige, planning and prepping snacks, meals, games, and other activities.

Laura is survived by husband, Joe Kortes of Fargo, ND; her children Austin Bergquist of Fargo, ND, and Paige Bergquist of Bismarck, ND; step-children Kaylyn (Matt) Huffman of Crookston, MN, and Jonathan Kortes of Fargo, ND; sisters Pat Scholar of Audubon, MN, and Michelle (Wyatt) York of Minnetrista, MN; mother-in-law Margo Bahr of Bemidji, MN; nieces Lindsey (Jeremy) Munns of Moorhead, MN, Katie Scholar of Moorhead, MN, and Jenny (Scott) Swenson of St. Louis Park, MN; nephew Tony (Martty) Trout of West Fargo, ND; Aunt Joan and Uncle John Leikness of Frazee, MN and Aunt Linda and Uncle Gary Leikness of Thornton, CO along with many, many other loving relatives and friends.

Laura is preceded in death by parents Lois and Corky Leikness; grandparents Marie and Elmer Hasselton and Mae and Ananias Leikness.

Laura had a contagious smile, making others smile when they were around her. Laura is and will be missed by so many friends and relatives. We know how much she was truly loved by so many people in her life, and the love she shared with all of us.

Blessed be her memory



Celebrating the Life of
Laura Ann (Leikness) Kortes
August 31, 1965 - August 28, 2022

