

Elizabeth Grace (Pillen) Hawley
October 30, 1978 - March 2024



Elizabeth Grace (Pillen) Hawley, 45, has fulfilled her required time in this world.

Beth, as everybody called her, had a special gift from God to find and love children who needed someone special in their lives. She was a dedicated teacher who loved all her children in the classroom, in the community, and in her home.

Beth was born October 30, 1978, in Newcastle to loving parents. She was the third oldest out of six children. Her family did a bit of moving when she was younger, but Newcastle

and Upton were always "home." She graduated from Upton High School in 1997 and attended Sheridan College and The University of Wyoming, where she graduated with a degree in elementary education.

Beth was a natural debater and won multiple national collegiate speech and debate awards while in college and high school. It was a well-known maxim in the family - Don't ever try to get into a debate with Beth...you will lose.

Beth was offered a job working for the Walt Disney Company's animation studio in Florida, but she married Richard Hawley on February 14, 2003, instead. They were sealed in the Billings Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints a year later on February 21, 2004.

Beth's greatest love was children, though she was never able to have any of her own. Beth and Richard tried every legal means available to have children, without success. So, they turned to fostering instead, taking in over 30 children and adopting two children out of the system, Trevor and Rachel. Two older children, Marterio and Heidi, also adopted Beth as a surrogate mother. Beth was named national foster parent of the year multiple times through various organizations and was celebrated in the marbled halls of Washington, D.C. She also co-owned or ran two preschools and a full-service restaurant over the years.

Beth loyally followed her husband Richard for his work and ended up teaching in Lovell, Evanston, Casper, and Prince George's County, Maryland. She loved every child in her room, bringing home many of them after school hours to work on science projects or help with homework. She could barely walk by the cafeteria of her school without the entire first grade screaming, "Mrs. Hawley!" and clearing the tables for hugs.

Her work in infertility and the foster system led to a nationwide non-profit, and her work was featured on the *ABC News* magazine 20/20...twice, as well as the *Katie Couric Show*.

Beth was a fierce advocate for the less fortunate. Once when teaching in Maryland, her kids could see the U.S. Capitol from the school window. They complained and wondered what it was like to go in. Beth asked why they had never been there, let alone inside, since it was a public building. They said they couldn't go in because they were black. Using her husband Richard's connections, who at the time was a staffer for Senator Mike Enzi, not only did they go on the first field trip in the school's memory, but she forced one of the U.S. Senators from Maryland to sit down with the kids and talk to them. Nobody argued with Beth Hawley.

Life was hard for Beth, who struggled with poor health all of her adult life. She went under anesthesia over 40 times for surgery on her fragile body. On March 20, 2024, Beth fell asleep and never woke up. She was an organ donor, and her gifts will keep on giving.

She is survived by her eternal companion Richard; her parents Corey and Julia Pillen of Newcastle; Her siblings, Michael (Sondra) Reid of Oklahoma, Christina (Gareth) Robertson of Lovell, Jennifer (Cody) Ingram of Evanston, Amanda (Amasa) Mecham of Green River, and Joseph (Farrah Joe) Pillen of Evansville; her four children Marterio (Sarah) Fuller of Powell, Heidi (Bryan Sanders) Dickerson of Casper, Trevor and Rachel of Byron; two granddaughters, many nieces and nephews, grandparents Helen and Sam Dower, and the many hundreds of kids that she took care of over the years.

Due to publication deadlines, up-to-date funeral arrangements can be found at: <https://www.haskellfuneralhome.com>.