



Josele "Jody" Frances Ward

May 10, 1939 - February 5, 2026

Jody was born in Corvallis, Oregon to Frank and Frances Ramsey. She and her brother, Reagan, spent most of their youth in Corvallis. She fondly remembered the circus train passing by her grandmother's Corvallis home near the railroad tracks and seeing the tall giraffes travelling by.

In her younger years, her family moved to Klamath Falls where her father coached at Klamath High School then, in 1945, he played professional football for the Chicago Bears. When the war broke out, her father volunteered with the Marines and served honorably. The family returned to Corvallis after the war.

Jody attended Oregon State University and was a proud Beaver and member of the Tri Delta sorority. She graduated from OSU then married her husband, Jan Ward, the very next day. Jody reflected, and would laugh, that it was quite an ask of her mother to coordinate graduation, then a wedding in a single weekend. They bounced between Bend and Portland in their early years together, then settled and raised two sons in Bend, Drake Ward and Dixon Ward fourth generation Bendites who carry on the spirit of independence encouraged by Jody and Jan.

Jody worked hard in life, alongside her husband Jan, building and selling residential communities in southeast Bend. They developed and built Nottingham Square, Tillicum Village, Timber Ridge, and Mountain High and most recently she and her family developed the Countryside residential community. She was very proud of what she and Jan created, always

believing that you should leave a place better than you found it. She has two grandsons, Riley and Jason, both of whom are graduates of Oregon State in engineering and have successfully entered the business world. She was well known for bragging about her grandsons to everyone she spoke with.

Jody loved to travel with her family and embraced every country and culture she encountered. Highlights include China, New York, Ecuador, Galapagos, Denmark, Amsterdam, and France. Family loved to rib her for her lack of language skills, always saying “Hola” in France and “Ciao” in Denmark. Jody and Jan also loved to travel by boat off of Campbell River, BC and explore the many islands and inns around Discovery Passage.

Jody was very generous, volunteering and contributing to many organizations, most of which focused on the arts. She was appointed by Gov. Kitzhaber as a founding member of the Oregon Cultural Trust and was also a founding member of the Deschutes Cultural Coalition. She sat on a committee for the Oregon Business Committee for the Arts and was an active participant on many advisory boards including Cascade Festival of Music, Art in Public Places, Caldera Advisory Committee, The Tower Theatre, BendFilm, the Boys and Girls Club, and OCF Leadership Council. She was also a proud sponsor of the High Desert Museum. She was especially active with her local PEO chapter and loved her time and friendships from Allied Arts.

Jody had enthusiasm for all that she saw to be possible. Her energy and excitement to experience and be involved with everything in our constantly changing Bend community was infectious. Her big personality had a lasting effect on all who knew her.

Jody is dearly missed by her family and friends.

Contributions in Jody’s memory may be made to the Boys & Girls Club of Bend.

A Celebration of Life is planned for Saturday, April 25th 6-8pm at the High Desert Museum.

Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home was honored to serve the family.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **25**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

59800 Hwy 97

Bend, OR 97702

<https://highdesertmuseum.org/>

Tribute Wall

JJ

“ My name is Joanna (Jody) Rasmussen James and Jody Ramsey was one of my bridesmaid's. I was married to Guinn Roy James on August 13, 1960 in Grants Pass, Oregon in the First Baptist Church. I met Jody in Eugene, Oregon and she spent the summer with me at my apt. at 1326 Lawrence. She made a perfect bridesmaid as she was always so sweet and kind. I am sorry I lost track of her over the years. I feel the loss of her now as my husband Guinn just went to Heaven on February 6, 2026. He was 91 and we have been married 66 years in August. Thank you Jody for being my friend.

Joanna Mary Rasmussen James - March 08 at 04:50 PM

JS

“ Jim & Carol Simerville lit a candle in memory of Josele Ward



Jim & Carol Simerville - February 25 at 09:29 AM