



Melissa Wilson Jacot

January 12, 1961 - February 9, 2026

Melissa Wilson Jacot, beloved spouse, sister, and friend, passed away at the age of 65 on February 9, 2026, at her home in Bend, Oregon, due to complications from Parkinson's disease.

Melissa was preceded in death by her parents, Grace and Melville Wilson; her sister, Yvonne Wilson; and her brothers, Bill Wilson and Melvin Wilson. She leaves behind her husband, John Jacot, her siblings, Bob (Darlene) Wilson, Donald (Valene) Wilson, Judy (Ken) Pless, Ann (Jerry Thrift) Wilson, and Jeffrey (Melissa) Wilson, her nieces and nephews Wendie, Mandy, Dustin, Melissa, Bill, Jeremy, Becky, Calvin, Charlie, Conner and Carson, many beloved friends including Lynne Eckstrom and Susan Evans, and her aunt by marriage Joan Verbarg. She also leaves behind a very devoted dog, Donovan, who still misses her very much.

Melissa was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1961, and spent her childhood in the Kittitas Valley. Music, especially singing, was always a big part of Melissa's life and she sang in church, school, and community events. She also played the piano and guitar, and learned to play many other instruments just for fun. She wrote songs, sang at weddings, and earned a spot in both the All State and All Northwest choirs while in high school. After graduating from Kittitas High School in 1979, Melissa attended Central Washington University where she earned a music education degree. In 2003, Melissa earned a Master's in Teaching from Grand Canyon University.

After graduating from Central, Melissa moved to Bend, Oregon, a place she

loved very much for its nature, mountains and community. Melissa taught choir in Bend for 29 years, starting at High Desert Middle School and then moving to the brand new Summit High School in 2001. For a portion of her years at Summit, Melissa also taught at Pacific Crest Middle School. Melissa directed many different choirs and musicals, and led her students in festivals, community concerts, and fundraisers. She mentored students who have embarked on their own musical careers. Although she never had children of her own, Melissa embraced the students in her classes as if they were family. She had a special gift for making everyone around her feel included and loved, quickly drawing them into her warm circle as part of her extended family.

Melissa and John were active members of the Eastmont Church in Bend, which provided a strong sense of community for their lives.

Melissa retired from teaching in 2022, after a Parkinson's diagnosis the previous year made it difficult for her to continue her work. She determinedly adjusted her life to cope with the many challenges that Parkinson's presented. Even though she lost the ability to sing, and to play piano and guitar, she was still very much able to appreciate music, and loved hearing her students and other singers perform.

Because of her inspiration and reputation as a choral director, Summit High School created the Melissa Jacot choral legacy award, which is offered to a choir student each year who meets the criteria established by Melissa.

Melissa had the joy of seeing the award named in her honor presented to its first recipient.

In her last year, Melissa required in-home care. Melissa's primary caregiver was Robin Hall, who complemented Melissa's humor and optimism perfectly, and who facilitated and protected Melissa in her final year of life, making it livable through laughter, kindness, and love. The caregiver team, Partners in Care and Hospice Bend were huge supporters who advocated a comfortable life, and provided much assistance with care.

Melissa will be remembered as a generous optimistic person, who showed

how to keep living and laughing even through some cruel physical realities. She greeted every day with a radiant smile and an optimistic spirit that inspired all who knew her. Even as her body began to fail her, Melissa remained focused on the good in life and consistently encouraged others to strive to be better. She exuded Christ-like love and character in everything she did, leaving a lasting impression of grace, kindness, and unwavering faith. She is already being missed by all of us she left behind. I sure know who's in charge of the choir up in Heaven, they've never sounded so good!

In lieu of a funeral, a service to celebrate Melissa's life will be held at Summit High School, 2855 NW Clearwater Drive, Bend, Oregon, on Friday June 12, at 4 pm. The Summit High School choir, joined by others in the community who knew Melissa, will perform songs specifically requested by Melissa before she died.

She will be deeply missed and forever cherished.

Arrangements were handled by Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home, Bend, Oregon. Please sign the online guestbook at www.niswonger-reynolds.com.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 12. 4:00 PM (PT)

Summit High School
2855 NW Clearwater Drive
Bend, OR 97703