



## Becky Jones Purcell

February 17, 1961 - September 30, 2024

It is with overwhelming grief we announce the passing of Becky Jones Purcell, 63 of Salem. She was a courageous fighter of pancreatic cancer and while surrounded and held by her family, lost the toughest fight on Monday, September 30th at 10:50 AM, at Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Becky was born Friday, February 17th, 1961, in Sparta, Illinois as the first born to Gerald (Jerry) Jones and Mary Ellen (Gordon) Jones. She grew up on a cattle farm in rural Sparta, Illinois. She became involved in the local 4-H program, where she competed in sewing and cooking, and showed cattle and rabbits. She always yearned for a horse but, instead, developed a special relationship with her cow, Mae which met her at the fence every day after school. She and Mae went on to win multiple 4-H shows. Her love for animals didn't stop there. She went on to rescue many dogs, cats, and even squirrels, however, she advocated for all living creatures, big and small. She attended Sparta high school until 1977 before moving to Salem, IL with her family for World Color Press. She finished her junior and senior years at Salem Township High School and graduated with the Class of '79.

In 1978, she met Terry Purcell on a blind date. He was a year younger, and she wasn't initially interested. However, his persistence along with his brand-new chestnut colored Trans-Am eventually won her over. They were wed

during a huge ceremony at the First Baptist Church in Salem on June 13, 1981. They started their young lives while Becky worked at Salem Cable TV and Terry, stocking shelves at Country Gardens grocery store. In 1984, they welcomed their only child, Whitney Purcell, into the world. They were doting parents and made constant sacrifices while raising her. They both held education in high regard and wanted to set a good example for their daughter. The young family moved to Carbondale where Becky worked at Sears to help support the family while Terry completed his degree. They later relocated to Edwardsville where Becky earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology with an emphasis on Ecology and Environment from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She graduated Suma Cum Laude and was elected to Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society.

Becky was honored and proud to be part of the Washington University School of Medicine's Neurology Research Department for the Spinal Cord Injury Program. There, she was the research lab manager for Dr. John McDonald, who developed therapies designed to help patients with long-term spinal cord injuries recover sensation, movement and independence while working directly with Christopher Reeve (Superman) and many others. The lab was ultimately moved to the east coast and Terry's career had led him overseas. She and Terry decided to part ways. She returned to Salem for a class reunion and saw her old family home was for sale. It was then, she determined it was the perfect time to move closer to family and purchased their family home.

She was talented enough to turn a hobby into a career and became a professional quilter. She opened Cloth Cottage Fabric Shop in Salem where she loved nothing more than visiting over coffee with her fellow quilters, helping them pick patterns and fabrics for their next projects, teaching those who wanted to learn, and decorating her shop window for every season. Her family doesn't remember a time when a sewing machine wasn't set up and

running in her home. She leaves behind hundreds of quilts they will hold dear and cherish for generations to come.

In addition to her academic and professional accolades, her most treasured role was being the best mom and Mimi to her daughter and “grands.” Becky never missed an event. She was a room mother, swim team board member, and biggest cheerleader for Whitney and her grandchildren. She put her whole heart into everything surrounding them, from preparing their favorite meals, making their Halloween costumes from scratch, making sure Christmas was always magical, caring for them when they were sick, and holding them when they were sad. Her warm embraces, winks from across the room, calls to just say “Hey, babe,” and unconditional love will be mournfully missed. Becky never met a stranger and welcomed all with open arms and a smile. Everything about her was precious and her presence exuded warmth and tenderness felt by all who knew her.

Left to deeply mourn her passing are her daughter, Whitney Purcell and husband Walter Gallia, and Granddaughters; Anabella Gallia and Eden Gallia all of Salem, Grandson; Daylin Gallia of Edwardsville, Sister; Lauren Lusch, Former husband and devoted friend; Terry Purcell, Father-in-law; Johnnie Purcell, Sisters in laws; Connie Bundy and Penny Purcell all of Salem, and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins whom she greatly loved. Also left are cherished friends that became family; Tammy Payne of Marion, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf of Florida, Linda Thompson and Trecia Hanna of Sparta, Cathy Helm of Belleville, Debbie Compton of Edwardsville, Kelly Kosa of Caseyville, Cheri Griffith and Brenda Spencer of Salem and Lora Mchenry of Sandoval, and her two black labs, Riley and Chloe.

She was preceded in death by her loving parents Jerry and Mary Ellen Jones, grandparents; Hershel and Alma (Witbracht) Gordon, and Ralph and

Thelma (Milligan) Jones, and mother in law; Betty (Horton) Purcell.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, October 12, 2024 at 2:00 PM at the Sutherland-Rankin Funeral Home in Salem. Immediately following the Celebration of Life, there will be a gathering at the Salem Elks Club to share stories and memories of Becky. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Salem Animal Control and will be accepted at the Sutherland-Rankin Funeral Home at 310 North Broadway, P.O. Box 97, Salem, Illinois 62881, (618)548-1234, who is honored to be of service to Becky's Family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) and the Funeral Home Facebook page.

# Previous Events

## **Celebration of Life**

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OCT **12**. 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM.

Sutherland - Rankin Funeral Home

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Becky Jones Purcell*



**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - October 12, 2024 at 12:35 AM

JK

“ *So sorry to hear about Becky. She was a beautiful, talented, kind lady. Our prayers are with her. Ray & June Kindermann*

**JUNE M KINDERMANN** - October 12, 2024 at 02:58 PM

TI

“ *Whitney, my most sincere condolences to you, your girls, and all of her loved ones. Becky's years on this earth were too few, but she packed so much life into them. Her kindness and love will surely live on in all of those whose lives she touched.*

**Tim** - October 12, 2024 at 12:09 PM

TS

“ *Ty, Maria, Amanda and Sandy planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Becky Jones Purcell.*

**Ty, Maria, Amanda and Sandy** - October 11, 2024 at 07:02 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Becky Jones Purcell.*



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October 11, 2024 at 07:02 PM



“ *Jason And Jennifer Haas lit a candle in memory of Becky Jones Purcell*



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**Jason and Jennifer Haas** - October 10, 2024 at 02:13 AM



“ *Tina Morgan purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Becky Jones Purcell.*



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**Tina Morgan** - October 09, 2024 at 06:34 PM



“ *Tina Morgan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Becky Jones Purcell.*

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**Tina Morgan** - October 09, 2024 at 06:34 PM

PA

“ Pamela A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Becky Jones Purcell.

Pamela A. - October 09, 2024 at 10:14 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Becky Jones Purcell.



October 08, 2024 at 09:54 AM

BD

“ Beth Dufresne planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Becky Jones Purcell.

Beth Dufresne - October 08, 2024 at 09:54 AM

RA

“ My sincerest condolences to the family of my friend Becky..how i will miss you..we had many good times..we shared many times some good, bad & sad..together we laughed & cried & at times we laughed till we cried..we spent time together cooking & just laying around the pool..all those memories will be forever cherished..goodbye my friend..till we meet again..

Rosa M Arguelles - October 06, 2024 at 11:16 AM

RB

“ *Rachel Compton & Heather Bittle purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Becky Jones Purcell.*



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**Rachel Compton & Heather Bittle** - October 06, 2024 at 08:30 AM