

Barb Morra, 1954 ~ 2009

Barb Morra ended her struggle with multiple sclerosis (MS) on Monday, June 15. She will be sorely missed by her many friends and family members.

Always tenacious and sometimes cantankerous, Barb lived a full life in which she exuberantly participated in hiking, rafting, tutoring young people, creating a wonderful home, fighting for equal access for the disabled, and laughing as often as possible. She was incredibly intelligent, eager for debate, funny, and beautiful.

Her life centered around the protection of our planet's greatest gift – water. Her activism to provide clean and abundant water for the community was indeed her best contribution for us while living, and she made arrangements to ensure that her activism for water will continue.

Barb was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on May 24, 1954, to Charles W. and Eileen T. Morra. Barb is survived by her mother, Eileen, and her two brothers, Richard and Russell. Richard's partner is Sally Colgan and Russell's wife is Sharon Morra. The children of Russell and Sharon are Jessica, Adam and Jake. She was preceded in death by her longtime partner, Steve Bruce, and her fabulous dog, Hayduke.

Barb graduated in 1972 from Pascack Valley High School at

Hillsdale, N.J. In 1977, Barb graduated with a B.S. in mass communication/business administration from Ramapo College at Mahwah, N.J. In 1981, Barb moved to Moab, and worked as a river guide for various outfitters until 1985. In 1986, Barb worked as an instructor for a program called "Kinderschool" at Brianhead Ski Resort, and afterwards returned to college. In 1989, Barb received a B.S. in elementary education/English from Utah State University, with a 3.9 grade average, and in 1991 she received her master's-level teaching certificate for special education from the University of Utah.

As an educator, Barb could skillfully examine a student's academic situation, find the weak spots, and tutor them to success. Students will remember her devotion to opening new doors of opportunity. For one man, it included a meeting with the famous physicist Stephen Hawking at Pack Creek Ranch, the two communicating with each other through the computer medium.

Barb's advancing MS prematurely ended her teaching career in special education at Grand County School District, but it did not end her work as an educator and a water resource activist in local and regional affairs. She was first drawn into community organizing when a high-level nuclear waste depository was proposed just outside of Canyonlands National Park near Davis and Lavender canyons. A campaign

that also involved David Brower, Randy Hayes, David Foreman, Edward Abbey, Ken Sleight and many others. Successfully, Barb also campaigned to stop a proposed toxic waste incinerator facility in the Cisco Desert of Grand County near the Colorado River.

Barb's most recent campaign, which started in 2000, is to stop development on sensitive lands in Grand County, especially the aquifer recharge zone at Johnson's Up On Top. Pollution from the proposed Cloudrock development could contaminate 80 percent of our drinking water supply for Spanish Valley and the city of Moab. Barb also served on the board of the Spanish Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District for one term, starting in 2002.

According to her wishes, Barb was cremated, with services provided by Spanish Valley Mortuary. A memorial service for Barb will be held at Old City Park on Sunday, July 12, at 3 p.m. The event is a potluck, with opportunities provided to express appreciation for her life and work.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to St. Francis Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 96, Moab, Utah 84532; or to Grand County Citizens for Clean Water, a project of Living Rivers, P.O. Box 466, Moab, UT 84532.

For more information please call John Weisheit at 435-259-1063 or Sarah Fields at 435-259-4734.

