

# Search

Continued from Page 1A

Jardine, listed at first as Jane Doe on the police report, died on the street. She was 55.

Left behind were three adult children, two grandchildren, a brother and two sisters — and a life navigated with schizophrenia.

The brain disorder caused hallucinations and delusions.

“But she was my mother and I loved her despite the life we had because of her mental illness,” Blare said.

## A struggling mother

According to Blare, Jardine was a good mom but struggled raising her kids alone, even before the brain disorder that usually starts to show symptoms in the mid- to late 20s.

Born in Hawthorne, Calif., Jardine graduated from Griffin College in Seattle in 1992. She worked as a certified nursing assistant, housekeeper and in casinos until mental illness took a hold of her life, according to her children.

During episodes of seeing and hearing things that didn't exist, Jardine's already complicated life unraveled.

Blare's father was never in her life, and Jardine divorced Blare's stepfather when she was a toddler. The single mother was left to navigate her mental illness and raising children alone.

## Three children taken

Blare and her younger sister and brother lived on and off with Jardine in Belfair, a rural town of fewer than 4,000 people in northwest Washington. Jardine's symptoms escalated when her children were still in elementary school.

The three siblings were in and out of foster homes, sometimes living in a car as their mother's symptoms came and went for days and weeks at a time. Neighbors sometimes called police about the unfit mother.

When Blare was 11, Jardine's father became legal guardian of his three grandchildren and moved them to Douglas County, Nevada. Soon after, Blare said, he put all three in foster care, saying he was unable to care for them.

Blare was separated from her brother and sister. She lived in 14 different foster homes before she was 18.

When Blare graduated from high



Angelina Blare places flowers in honor of her mother, Michelle Jardine, near the Cares Campus in Reno on April 11.

PHOTOS BY JASON BEAN/RGJ

school in 2010, she vowed to put her family back together again. She contacted Jardine, still living in Washington.

“She figured out how to get down here right away” after that first phone call, Blare said.

She still remembers her mother getting off the bus in downtown Reno.

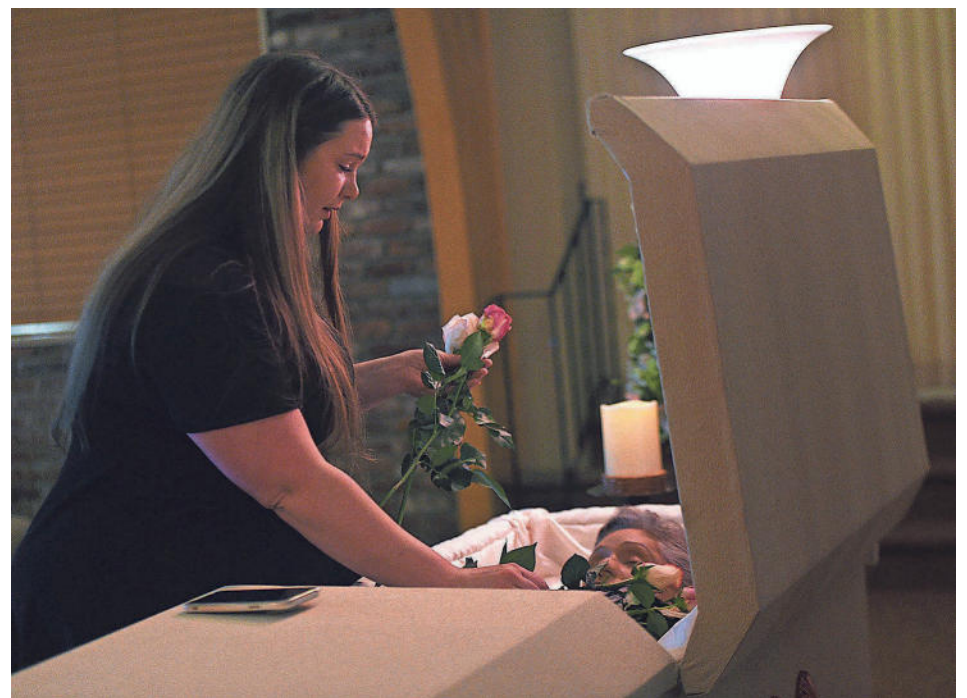
“You never forget their face or smell or the sound of your mother's voice,” Blare said, her voice trailing off on one of the many days she has left flowers at the site of where her mother was last alive.

## Life in Reno

Jardine moved with Blare into a small studio apartment in 2010. Things were good; Jardine was taking medications and seemed stable.

When Blare left for college in San Francisco in the fall of 2011, she helped pay for her mother to stay in motels, making up the difference in what Jardine got in social security payments.

See SEARCH, Page 5A



Angelina Blare places flowers on her mother's body at Walton's Funeral Home in Reno on April 11. Michelle Jardine was killed when she was hit by a car near the Cares Campus homeless shelter in Reno.

Advertisement

## Beth Elise Wait Jacobs Distinguished Nevada Educator 1930-2022

RENO – Beth Elise Jacobs graduated with honors on October 28, 2022, five weeks short of her 92nd birthday after beating cancer but not dementia after a series of strokes.

The third of four siblings, she was born on December 6, 1930, in Hannaford, North Dakota, to longtime Hannaford Mayor Chauncey Wait and his wife Alice.

Beth was a varsity basketball point guard and valedictorian in high school. She graduated from Mayville (ND) Teachers College, now Mayville State University. She learned early how to compete and to fight. That included beating breast cancer in her mid-80s.

She taught at K-12 levels in North Dakota, Montana and Nevada. She and her husband Jack Anderson had three children. The young family migrated west attempting to alleviate the asthma symptoms of their youngest, Mark Lowell Anderson. They finally settled in the clear air of Ely, Nevada, where she taught at the elementary and high school levels. She also developed a thriving clientele teaching piano.

In 1977, the Nevada Dept. of Education praised her work at White Pine High School.

“I do not recall in 25 years in education a more consistently superior level of performance than your and their presentations!” wrote NDE official Tom Summers.

“You did a masterful job of directing and working with them,” he added. It was a harbinger of things to come.

She spent several years developing real estate in Oregon while married to Tom Jacobs. Beth returned to Nevada's Churchill County High School where she taught English, theater and forensics (speech arts).



Beth and Baby Mark once upon a time.

In Fallon, she became friends with the late Churchill County Commissioner John Hanifan and his wife, Starlene. Several members of the Hanifan family were in her classes, including Mike, a member of her championship debate teams.



Her Greenwave team won the University of Nevada Invitational and placed second in the Southern Utah State College Invitational against more than 1,700 contestants from Utah, Idaho and Nevada.

The team's star, Troy Keeping, went on to compete in the 1982 Nationals in San Francisco, making it to the semi-finals and finishing eighth overall in prose and poetry. Keeping became a very successful businessman and today resides in Lexington, Kentucky. He and his wife visited Beth in Reno shortly before she passed away.

“The lessons and skills you taught me helped shape my future. I became a powerful CEO and recently retired,” Keeping told her.

Mike Hanifan recently retired as a U.S. Army brigadier general and assistant adjutant general of the Nevada Army Guard. Beth attended his installation at Stead several years ago.

Fallon grad Dale Erquiaga held several positions in Nevada government, including state superintendent of public instruction. Today he serves as acting chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

“I am writing to express my gratitude for the time we spent together at Churchill County High School,” Erquiaga recalled to his teacher last summer.

“As you know, I was recently named Acting

Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education. It's the capstone of a long career in public service, and I have you to thank for getting me started.

“When you came to Fallon, I was shy and awkward, quite unsure of myself. The way you approached drama and debate gave me confidence. You even attempted to teach me to sing in the role of Murrin' Sam when you bravely decided we should stage the first high school musical ('Li'l Abner') in Fallon in many years. Although I was never able to carry a tune, you convinced me it was okay to stand on stage and do my best. You allowed me to help with 'Damn Yankees' and you coached me through an oratory competition at a debate tournament. That training helps me to this day.

“I still shy away from public speaking, but I know how to get through it because of the foundation you gave me,” Erquiaga added.

“I remember fondly how you came to Fallon as an 'outsider.' You seemed quite brave and glamorous to this local boy, and I know you stood up for yourself – and your students – during your time there. Many of us were positively influenced by the example you set.

“Please know that I and many others remember the impact you had on our lives. You are never far from my thoughts when I step up to a podium! Thank you,” Erquiaga concluded.

Beth indeed cut a glamorous figure driving her 280-Z sports car and was not afraid to do big things in a small town. She was a longtime member of the Nevada State Education Association, the teachers union.

While 1982's “Li'l Abner” was well received, the conservative Fallon population largely boycotted the 1983 production of the baseball fantasy “Damn Yankees.” The 1955 Bob Fosse/ Gwen Verdon Broadway smash later became a major Hollywood movie, both based on the book “The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant.”

“They just couldn't fathom a show with a cuss word in the title,” Beth once said recalling the show's greatest hit, “You Gotta Have Heart.”

Perhaps that song best encapsulates her life.

“I became a strong contender for coach of the year, but the good ole boy system was just not ready to let a woman to hold that title,” Beth remembered.

That snub and the “Damn Yankees” brouhaha contributed to her decision to leave Fallon not long thereafter. Her students gave her a surprise going-away party at a Fallon pizza restaurant.

When informed of her death, Chancellor Erquiaga wrote “Thank you for letting me know. Saddened by this news. She was brave and inspired that characteristic in others.”

She closed out her teaching career at Washoe County's Gerlach High. She met her third husband Jesse Phillips in Gerlach.

Like Fallon, her Gerlach students treated her to a warm going-away party. They presented her with an extra-large t-shirt emblazoned with “I'm retired, and this is as dressed-up as I get.” It is covered in warm and grateful handwritten messages. She kept it for the rest of her life.

In retirement, Beth supported various charities and political campaigns but focused mostly on the arts. One of the high points came when she attended the great tenor Luciano Pavarotti's only Reno performance.

Despite being born with short fingers, the former keyboard teacher honed her proficiency playing Chopin on her Steinway grand piano. Beth delighted in giving occasional free concerts, especially at the Washoe County Senior Center.

On summer mornings, she would often open the patio door of her northwest Reno home and fill the air with Chopin and show tunes.

She wrote and copyrighted several plays and books of poetry. Under the pen name of “Bewaj Phillips” (a combination of her life's various initials), she published “Sex, Politics and Other Confusing Stuff,” an illustrated book of poetry with titles including “Ode to Eleanor Roosevelt,” “Mother-in-Law from Hell,” “To Lysistrata” and “Then We'll Burn All the Books.” Some of her poems will be uploaded to her new website, BethNVedu.org/ Remembrances may be sent to <Memories@BethNVedu.org>

Beth was preceded in death by her parents; former husbands Jack Anderson, Tom Jacobs and Jesse Phillips; her son Mark, a member of Teamsters Union Local 533; daughter Lynn Marie who died at birth; sisters Lois Marie Cronk of California and Donna “Lucy” Lou Jahner of Idaho; and her brother Mark Alton Wait who became a basketball star at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, the national research institution for the hearing impaired.

Beth is survived by her daughters, Laurie Ferrin (Paul) of Carson City; Elise Weatherly and great-grandson Joshua Weatherly of Sun Valley, Nev.; granddaughter Heather Purkeypyle of Reno; nephew Paul Jahner (Anita) of Idaho; nieces Jennifer Jahner (Brad) of the State of Washington, and Carol Morris (Ron) of California; 12 great- and great-great nieces and nephews; her education colleague Jay Eck of Verdi, Nevada, and her next-door neighbor and biographer, Andrew Barabano.

Her ashes will be scattered at some of her favorite places. She requested that any remembrances in her name be donated to the Reno Domestic Violence Resource Center (formerly Committee to Aid Abused Women — CAAW).

Beth Elise Wait Anderson Jacobs Phillips lives on in her work, her family, her friends and especially her students. Remember her fondly in high humor, support public education and perform an occasional kindness in her honor — especially to wandering cats.

Much more at BethNVedu.org

Send remembrances to <Memories@BethNVedu.org>