



## Laurie Bennett Ellis

September 23, 1955 - March 22, 2014

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Laurie Bennett Ellis, 58, of St. Augustine, died Saturday, March 22, 2014, at the Haven Hospice Care Center in Orange Park, two and a half years after she learned she had ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. Mrs. Ellis was a school teacher who loved what she did, was proud of her students' successes and grateful that she was able to continue teaching for two school years after her diagnosis. She taught for four years at PVPV/Rawlings Elementary in Ponte Vedra, and before that for four years at the Center for Arts at Murray Middle School. Before moving to Florida, she taught in Kelso, Wash., Sioux Falls, S.D., and Bow, N.H. Mrs. Ellis was featured in an article in The Record on August 4, 2013 that showed her love of teaching and her determination to teach as long as she could. In that article, her class's parent liaison, Kim McGowan, said of her, "Words could never express properly how thankful and lucky we were to have the fortune of having you as our children's teacher. The dedication, love, spirit, encouragement, support and honor you have demonstrated will never be forgotten." Mrs. Ellis was born on Sept. 23, 1955 in Brookline, Mass., to Carol Bennett and the late Irving "Jack" Bennett. She grew up in North Easton, Mass. She graduated magna cum laude from Curry College and earned her master's degree from Tufts University. She served on Gov. Charlie Crist's Reading Initiative Task Force. She is survived by her husband, Peter, of St. Augustine; her son, Jared D'Amico, also of St.

Augustine; her mother, of Concord, N.H.; three sisters, Kim Zueli of California City, Calif., Karen Mark of North Easton and Kris LaBrake of Concord; a cousin, Dr. Pam Burke of Reading, Mass.; four nieces; three nephews; and many dear friends, including Dr. Mary Jones of Harrisburg, S.D., and Patsy Butler-Gratzfeld of Sioux Falls. Her husband and son were her principal caregivers. Before her death, she gave money to PVPV/Rawlings Elementary to start a book collection that she hoped would encourage students to develop a lifelong love of reading. She also established a scholarship in her name for high-performing students who want to become teachers. A memorial service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Dr, Ponte Vedra Bch, FL 32082. A mass of Christian Burial will be held in her hometown of North Easton, Mass at a later date. Interment will be in Evergreen Cemetery in St. Augustine. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in her name to: ALS Research, In care of Dr. Kevin Boylan, Department of Neurology, Mayo Clinic, 4500 San Pablo Road South, Jacksonville, FL 32224 The family thanks Haven Hospice, Mayo Clinic, the ALS Association of Florida and the Council on Aging for helping Mrs. Ellis. The family also thanks their neighbors, people in the St. Johns County School System, The St. Augustine Record and their many friends for their support and kindness. St. Johns Family Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Pete...I'm so very sorry to read of Laurie's passing. I can only imagine how difficult this time is for you and her son. She was a remarkable women and the two of you were lucky to share so many great years together. Heartfelt condolences Bev Livingston*

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**Bev Livingston** - March 29, 2014 at 12:00 AM