



## Ms Laurie W McLeod

January 14, 1956 - August 7, 2019

Stockbridge –

Laurie McLeod, 63, died on Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center.

Laurie was born on January 14, 1956 to Ian and Jane McLeod in Cleveland, OH. She attended Rosemary Hall High School, then came east to attend Middlebury College. She later obtained her postgraduate degree in movement and dance at the Laban Center in London, England, where she lived for several years and developed close professional and personal ties.

Laurie was the founder and longtime visionary of Victory Girl Productions, the Stockbridge, MA-based home of her innovative choreography, filmmaking, and writing work. In addition to myriad well-received local projects at locales as diverse as the site of a defunct furnace and a public pool, Laurie's work was prominently featured in the New York Times in 2004 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/20/arts/dance-esther-williams-eat-your-heartout.html?searchResultPosition=4>) for her underwater film starring Chinese actor Luo Yong Wang, which led to projects in Chicago and New York's inaugural High Line Festival. Her dance company was the first in residence at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, MA, then as now under the leadership of Joe Thompson, a tireless champion of her work.

In addition to being a dancer, choreographer, and filmmaker, Laurie made an impact in the lives of Berkshire county kids by visiting classrooms and teaching reading and math through dance via her self-developed character

Annie Lavender, for whom she developed a never-realized PBS show. In later years, Laurie was also a writer of self-published how-to guides (including *Make It Happen in 10 Minutes a Day: the Simple, Lifesaving Method for Getting Things Done*), written when her son was a toddler. An abiding and nourishing fixture of her life was the water fitness classes she taught many students over many years at the Kilpatrick Athletic Center and Berkshire South Community Center. Many of her students became dear friends and champions of her artistic work.

Most importantly, Laurie was a devoted mother to her son Javier, 12.

To artist friends, in particular younger artists, she was a truly fierce and vocal champion. She mentored and inspired countless dancers, visual artists, actors, and musicians with whom she collaborated. Her unflagging energy, generosity of spirit, and refusal to take 'no' as an answer permitted no small amount of otherwise daunted creativity to flourish.

Besides her son, Laurie is survived by her father, Ian McLeod of Brookline, MA; her sister, Kim McLeod of Brookline, MA; her niece; Caitlin Axelrod-McLeod of Malden, MA, and her nephew; Nicholas Axelrod-McLeod and his wife Nora of Redondo Beach, CA. She is predeceased by her mother; Jane McLeod and brother Jeffrey McLeod.

There will be a celebration of Laurie's life at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory can be made to The Berkshire Medical Center in care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.

# Tribute Wall

SH

“ Dearest Laurie always was and always will be. Although estranged in later years I always loved you deeply. From the day I walked into the dance studio we connected like a light being turned on. So much fun with Laredo Dance Co dancing at Sadlers Wells Theatre and Jacob's Pillow amid Winter snow. The studio and time we spent at Gt Barrington, your generosity & love live on. You are missed. I miss knowing you are no longer. I am so glad you got to be a mum. Suzanne (Suzi Ward) Hurley (Australia)

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Suzanne Hurley - September 19, 2020 at 10:32 PM

AC

“ I knew and loved Laurie when she was a teenager living in Canada in the 1970s. She walked through the doors of Havergal College - a girl's private school in Toronto- and brought so much laughter and love into our lives. She and I shared many happy times, including a family ski trip to Killington, Vermont where we spent more time sliding downhill than skiing. Laurie was a gifted story teller and a friend who loved to share everything she felt was special. She knew about James Taylor and Janis Joplin long before the rest of us did and she would tell tales of Dave Brubeck's music and books we should read. She visited JFK's gravesite and came home and talked to me for hours about leadership. She loved her family deeply and when we connected briefly five years ago she told me about her son Javi and explained how he had captured her heart - and I knew her life was complete. She clearly loved ❤️ you so much Javier. I am so saddened by her death, a bright star has left us far too soon. But I do believe the brightest stars continue to light our path in life. And I will think of her when I watch a great performance or hear a great tale or when I laugh until I cry. With my love and friendship to Kim and Javier and to her wonderful Dad. It was an honour to know and love Audie. Alannah Campbell.

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alannah campbell - August 28, 2019 at 02:08 PM

DS

“ My privilege of meeting Laurie was not until the late stages of her illness, but she was a great pleasure to talk with. I tried to just sit with her at the end of each shift and shoot the breeze. She told me about various stages of her life, and it's been surreal to read through the comments here and see these same stories living and breathing. I see she kept good company.

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**David Sorkin** - August 21, 2019 at 05:28 PM

EH

“ Laurie was one of the most beautiful people I've ever met. She worked with me for years to manage her lymphedema, the disabling side effect of her cancer treatment. Throughout it all she was an avid researcher of new and promising therapies and was always full of hope that a miracle would be found. She always greeted me with her warmth and charm and was so grateful for the little relief I could offer her with my massage. She told wonderful stories of her life which gave me a glimpse into her brilliance, talent, and wonderful humor. And always first and foremost in her heart was her beloved Javi who she adored and was so very proud of. I am so terribly sorry for Javi and her family and loved ones. I will miss her dearly and I send my deepest condolences to her dear family.

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**Elizabeth Holbrook** - August 20, 2019 at 08:12 PM

HN

“ I was so sorry to hear of Laurie's passing. She was my upstairs neighbor years ago on Church St. and I can remember many afternoons hanging out with her and drinking tea. Laurie was the most kind and gentle person, who loved everyone and everything with her entire being. The world lost a shining star and heaven gained a beautiful angel.

xoxo

Heidi Nejaime

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Heidi Nejaime - August 20, 2019 at 02:07 PM

MN

“ laurie was a sweet lady who always greeted us with a smile  
please accept our condolences  
Marilyn and nabih nejaime

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marilyn nejaime - August 17, 2019 at 04:56 PM

KR

“ I first met Laurie when I'd opened Chez Pet in Great Barrington. She was a devoted animal lover and a beautiful person inside and out. I still have one of the kitties that she fostered that is now 15 years old.

I'm shocked about her passing. Rest in peace my dear friend 💕💕

Kathie Ricci

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Kathie Ricci - August 12, 2019 at 02:29 PM

GA

“ I first met Laurie in 2002 at Eden Hill Recreation Center where she taught water aerobics and I worked in the office. We met again briefly in 2006 in the pool at Berkshire South, I always remember feeling energized and taller after her class. It had something to do with the movement, choice of music and her laughter. I was saddened to read of Laurie's passing and send my deepest sympathy to her family.

Glynis Arnold - August 12, 2019 at 09:49 AM

GA

“ Glynis Arnold lit a candle in memory of Ms Laurie W McLeod



Glynis Arnold - August 12, 2019 at 09:34 AM

AZ

“ Ann Zaccaria lit a candle in memory of Ms Laurie W McLeod



Ann Zaccaria - August 11, 2019 at 06:00 PM

DE

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Debs - August 11, 2019 at 06:21 AM



“ *Jean Louis lit a candle in memory of Ms Laurie W McLeod*



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**Jean Louis** - August 11, 2019 at 04:08 AM

AS

“ *I had the great pleasure to meet Laurie in the early 2000's when DancenowNYC presented her films. We lost touch over the last ten years and I was shocked to read her obituary in today's Berkshire Eagle. I'd like to extend my heartfelt condolences to her family.*

*Andrea Sholler*

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**Andrea Sholler** - August 10, 2019 at 02:11 PM

NW

“ *Nanci Worthington lit a candle in memory of Ms Laurie W McLeod*



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**nanci worthington** - August 10, 2019 at 11:17 AM

NW

“ Laurie and I also met in 1982 when both of us worked at the restaurant Hayden's in Gt. Barrington. Catching up on each other's lives with chance meetings as if we still worked together daily was always a story telling delight, with almost as much choreographic description as verbal! I'm sure it was something to see but to us it was simply a part of how we communicated. A woman who reveled in immediacy, her passing is truly a loss not only to family and friends but to those unknown who were touched by her through all of her different arts. Blessings Laurie, be well.

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nanci worthington - August 10, 2019 at 11:17 AM

GY

“ Laurie was one of the first people we met upon moving to Gt Barrington in 1982. My two young sons and I would swim at the small pool that used to be part of the Days Inn (before it was the Days Inn), during winters, as did Laurie. And they had a sauna, where we'd all get warm, and talk. Laurie and I inevitably talked of the movies we'd been seeing at the Mahaiwe. In fact, the boys and I started referring to her as "Movies," a nickname that Laurie liked. Over the years we'd bump into each other here or there, at cultural events, but less than I would have liked.

I'd say, "Long time no see, Movies," and she'd smile, and tell me what she'd just seen.

Shocked and sorry to hear of her passing. She was great.

Geoff Young

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geoffrey young - August 10, 2019 at 07:23 AM

DM

“ I was first introduced to Laurie approximately 2005. I was with my partner Jan and she told me we were meeting up with her friend Laurie at the Tate Modern in London at that I'd love her. I did. I loved her energy, her passion for dance and her voice ! So much so when she left a message on our answering machine I would play it over and over again.

Laurie and Javi came to stay with us in Ramsgate , England in 2018 for 10 days and we had such fun. Laurie was so relaxed and happy , the weather was great and I got to spend lots of time getting to know Javi. My sweet Laurie what a wonderful young man Javi is. I was heartbroken when Jan woke me with the news of your passing. I hold dear the memories we made. I will never forget your voice and your laughter.

Sweet Laurie , I will drink a glass of rhubarb gin in honour of you.

All my love  
Debs xxxxx

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Debs Moriarty - August 09, 2019 at 04:00 PM

DM

“ Debs Moriarty lit a candle in memory of Ms Laurie W McLeod



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Debs Moriarty - August 09, 2019 at 03:46 PM