



Linda Jean Gast

October 24, 1951 - March 16, 2026

A little bit of light left this world when Linda passed on March 16, 2026. She was born in St. Joseph, Michigan to Harry and Jean (Warren) Gast. She grew up on the family farm with her brother Dennis and sister Barbara graduating from Lakeshore High School and Michigan State University. She and a couple of friends took a semester off during college and spent 4 months backpacking around Europe, spending her 20th birthday inside the Arctic Circle.

After graduating, Linda worked as a VISTA volunteer in Cincinnati, Ohio with the Urban Appalachian Council. When her stint with VISTA was over, Linda moved to Portland following several of her high school friends who were in the area. While working with low-income community and neighborhood programs during the day, she spent her evenings at Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College in Portland, graduating in 1986.

Linda clerked for Lincoln County Judges prior to beginning her real career with Lincoln County Legal Aid. Linda helped form and sustain the Legal Aid office by fundraising (including a legendary performance at the Campaign for Equal Justice comedy fundraiser LAF-OFF), as well as recruiting and mentoring attorneys, both volunteer and staff to help pursue her mission of equal justice for all, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Linda got great satisfaction working with her clients, presenting their cases in

court and working out their legal issues. She actively worked on improving access and outcomes during moments of crisis or systems failing to function as expected. Linda helped provide knowledge with humility to interns, coworkers, volunteers while working on strengthening support systems within our community. Linda participated in multiple boards and organizations providing her unique insights from years supporting the vulnerable populations. She established a working relationship between the Lincoln County Legal Aid Office and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. This included representing tribal members, establishing grants and assisting with writing procedural rules for use within Tribal Court.

Linda worked at Legal Aid for over thirty years, retiring on October 31, 2017, but continued to volunteer with the office. In 2019 she received the Oregon State Bar's President's Public Service Award for her time with Legal Aid. Linda's accomplishments, interests, and awards are interminable, but her commitment to justice can be summarized by saying that Linda touched more lives than can be measured through her willingness to be present and supportive without judgment.

In her spare time Linda and her French horn were a member of the Pacific Coast Wind Ensemble and played in the pit orchestra for several local musicals. She also enjoyed exploring the Oregon coast with visiting friends and family.

Linda took great pleasure being an aunt to her brother's nine children (Chris, Kelly, Lisa, Nick, Tom, Skip, Becca, Jenna and Lilli). And a special thanks to Becca's husband Marvin who came out to Oregon several times to help Linda and her friend Kathe Drier-Thurber who stopped by often.

Linda is survived by her sister, Barbara Curtis of Midland, Michigan and her brother, Dennis Gast of St. Joseph, Michigan. She was preceded in death by

her parents and her partner Newport fishman Robert Pillman.

Linda has been cremated as she wished. There will be a memorial held in Newport and a gathering at the family farm this coming summer.

Please consider a donation to The Campaign for Equal Justice in Linda's honor.