



Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter

November 1, 1966 - December 22, 2025

Jennifer Anne Cotter

11.1.1966-12.22.2025 – 59 years old

Loving partner to Tracy Chapman for 29 years, daughter of Ellen and the late Jim Cotter, sister to Shannon Cotter Ryan (Tim) and brothers Steve, Jim and Paul Cotter. Devoted and adoring aunt to nieces Olivia Ryan, Kaite Cotter, and Agatha Cotter; great-nieces Valerie and Tatum Ryan; nephews, Jake, Casey, Sam, Henry, George, and Charlie Cotter; and Jack (Irie) and Max Ryan.

Jennifer Anne Cotter passed away peacefully at home on December 22, 2025 after a valiant battle with cancer. For several weeks prior she shared love, laughter and tears with wave upon wave of countless family members and friends – most of whom could not believe that one so young at heart and dedicated to healing was nearing her transition. Through it all, Jenny was an absolute champion – full of gratitude, grace, and her trademark good humor. Jenny grew up in the Broad Ripple neighborhood of Indianapolis. Jenny was very smart, curious, adventurous, and naturally athletic. She attended Christ the King and was a key part of a championship kickball team. (!) She graduated from Bishop Chatard High School where she played softball and then attended Indiana University.

Jenny had a one in a million sense of humor – and was a one in a million human being. She always made other people feel better having been in her presence. Her intelligence and wit combined with sincere kindness and

compassion made her truly a delight to be around – and the life of the many parties. She was a natural empath and cared deeply about her closest friends and family, as well as all of the citizens of the world and the animals. She was a lifelong vegan.

In high school, Jenny was voted most likely to be a stand-up comedian. She fulfilled that prophecy 35 years later, when she took a series of comedy classes and performed at Helium Comedy Club to the rave reviews of friends and strangers alike.

Jenny was a great dancer and her moves were legendary – and surprising! People got out of her way on the dance floor. She and a housemate hosted many slam dance parties in their living room back in the day. Jenny loved music and had eclectic and far-ranging tastes, including classic rock and roll, folkly female songwriters, and icons like Prince, David Bowie, Billie Holiday, and Cher. One of her all-time favorite concerts was the Rolling Stones.

Jenny met the love of her life, Tracy Chapman, when she was 30. She lived most of her adult life in South Broad Ripple. Jenny and Tracy enjoyed nearly three decades together during which they were virtually inseparable.

A lover of travel and nature, Jenny treasured childhood family trips to Rhode Island and Canada to visit family and connect with cousins at the lake and ocean. Jenny adventured across the US and across the pond to Europe. She and Tracy lived in Germany and Italy, where they helped run a Tuscan B & B. Her favorite places included the mountains and the beach.

Jenny's eight years as a nanny to her nieces and nephews were truly a labor of love and mutual adoration. She was proud to be such a meaningful influence and treasured their time together. She always made it a priority to attend their games and graduations.

In her nearly 20 years of managing restaurants (Broad Ripple Brew Pub and Twenty Tap), Jenny was a de facto “den mother” of dozens of employees – checking in; keeping spirits up with a joke, wry comment, or line from a movie; staying late to make sure everyone had a ride home. Employees and patrons alike loved her.

Another reflection of Jenny's kindness is that she always remembered people's birthdays and took time to make a call or send a card. Those close to her often received unusual and thoughtful presents – she was a wonderful gift giver.

What is less known about Jenny is that she was an excellent artist. She took thousands of photos and had a great eye. She was also a painter, using acrylics on canvas. Although there aren't many, her paintings are stunning and powerful – and reflect a true and original talent that she shared with love. Jenny was also a writer and left unfinished manuscripts for essays and plays. Jenny was a deeply sensitive and spiritual person. Jenny's thoughtfulness is legendary. Her kindness is an inspiration. Her spirit lives on in the hearts of all who were lucky enough to know her.

“Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower,
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.
~ William Wordsworth

A Celebration of Life service will be held Saturday, April 18, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at All Souls Unitarian Church, 5805 East 56th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46226. A reception will follow at 1:00 p.m. at Northside Events & Social Club, 2100 East 71st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46220.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Jenny's honor are suggested to Women Writing for (a) change online at <https://www.womenwritingbloomington.org/donate/> or by mail to The Writing for (a) change Foundation, P.O. Box 6657, Bloomington, IN 47407.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

All Souls Unitarian Church
5805 E. 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46226

Reception

APR 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

Northside Events & Social Club
2100 East 71st Street
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Tribute Wall



“ Kerry G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.

Kerry G. - April 16 at 02:56 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Lisa Chapman - April 14 at 08:19 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.



April 14 at 11:59 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.

April 14 at 11:59 AM

JR

“ I remember how Jenny would call Mary and I to let us know when the symphony would be performing at the Brew Pub for the employees at Christmas so we could attend. She even did this after she had left the Brew Pub. What a wonderful lady!

Jim Russell - April 10 at 03:17 PM

CX

“ Chris (Caldwell) Toher xoxo purchased the In Heaven's Arms Bouquet for the family of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.



Chris (Caldwell) Toher xoxo - April 10 at 02:11 PM

RO

“ Robbie purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.



Robbie - April 07 at 01:31 PM

RO

“ Robbie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jennifer "Jenny" Anne Cotter.

Robbie - April 07 at 01:31 PM

MV

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Marcia Veldman - March 25 at 02:17 PM

MO

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Mary Beth O'Brien - March 19 at 08:30 PM

HA

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Haley - March 19 at 08:11 PM



“ Jenny was a great friend



Anthony Dickey - March 18 at 02:55 PM

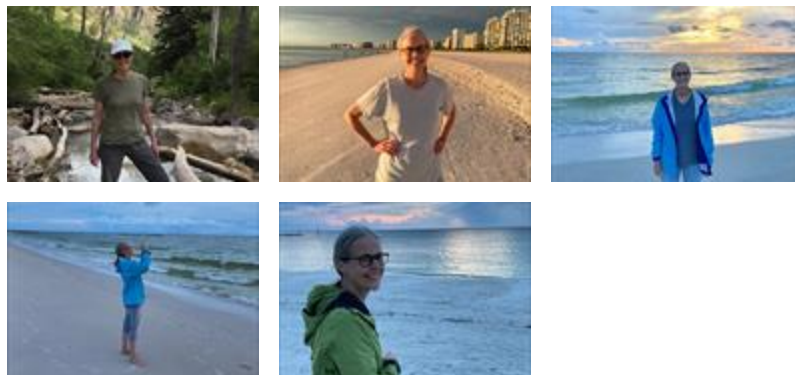
JK

“ I moved across the street from Jenny and Tracy in 2022. They were the sweetest people on the block. When I had to travel or had personal issues, despite Jenny already being sick, she stepped up every single time without question to help with my house and pets. I am forever grateful. Go Fever!! Go Pacers!! Go Hoosiers!! Miss you forever

Jacob Keating - March 18 at 01:00 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Shirley Brothers Mortuaries & Crematory - March 18 at 09:02 AM

MO

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mary Beth O'Brien - March 17 at 09:17 PM