



## Dr. Allana Rose Hamilton

September 1, 1965 - February 23, 2021

Allana Rose Hamilton

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Allana Rose Hamilton, loving wife, daughter, sister, and friend passed away peacefully Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at home in Blountville, TN. Lana was taken way too soon but lived a full life, accomplished so much and was greatly loved by many.

Lana was born September 1, 1965 to Byron and Florence Hardin in Greeneville, TN. She was raised in Mosheim, TN and attended West Greene High School. Upon graduating, she enrolled in Tusculum College where she majored in biology and worked in the registrar's office where she discovered and refined administrative talents that would later open great career doors. She graduated with a B.S. degree in 1987 and soon took a position as a shift chemist at BASF, Inc. in Morristown, TN. She enjoyed her work there but was drawn to do something more with her life, so, in 1989, she enrolled in graduate school at East Tennessee State University to pursue a master's degree in Biology. She funded her education with a teaching assistantship and found her passion . . . teaching. While teaching during graduate school, she also worked as a naturalist at Warrior's Path and Davey Crockett State Parks (and would later lead wildflower hikes at Roan Mountain State Park). Also, in graduate school, she met and married James Hamilton. She often joked that she was "the only girl in that class, so James had only one option." She excelled in graduate school and as a teacher, and upon graduation in 1991, she was immediately hired at Northeast State Community College in Blountville, TN as an adjunct biology teacher. This would be the start of an incredible career in higher education combining her love of teaching, her gift of administration, and her passion to serve that would span the next thirty years.

In 1991, Lana and James purchased a storybook farmhouse built in the late 1800's nestled in the foothills along the North Fork of the Holston River in Hilton's, VA and would live there for the next 26 years (until moving to Blountville in 2018). During those years, Lana continued working at Northeast, quickly being promoted from adjunct faculty, to instructor, assistant professor (1992-2008), Biology Department Coordinator (1997-2001), Academic Dean (2001-2008), to Vice President of Academic Affairs (2008-2017). During this time,

Lana again returned to school and earned her doctorate in education from East Tennessee State University, preparing her for her next appointment. In January of 2017, Lana accepted the position as President of Jackson State Community College in Jackson, TN. Lana never dreamed of being a college president or of living in West Tennessee, but, as always, she quickly made herself at home, dedicated herself to being a servant leader and embraced Jackson State and the Jackson community as her family. She dedicated herself to Jackson State until October of 2019 when she was entrusted and appointed to the position of Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for the State of Tennessee by the Tennessee Board of Regents, the position she proudly held at the time of her passing. During her education and throughout her career, Lana received numerous honors and awards, which she would not have wanted mentioned or listed . . . except for one. In 1996-1997, she was awarded Faculty of the Year at Northeast State Community College. This award was nominated and voted by the students. Lana's entire career was dedicated and driven by a passion to help students succeed. This honor touched her as it acknowledged her commitment to students. Though her incredible gift of administration removed her from the classroom, her focus remained that students have the opportunity to attend college and succeed. This passion was fueled by her own experience, remembering how she was afforded the opportunity to attend and succeed at Tusculum College, which dramatically changed the course of her life. She often referenced education as one of the three driving force in her life, the first two being faith and family, in that order.

Outside of work, Lana loved the outdoors. She was an avid runner and walker. She was always ready for a hike and could identify any wildflower and most plants and trees you came across on your journey. She loved to bike, camp, fish, and hunt. She was accomplished with firearms and as an archer. She was a volunteer instructor for the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (1998-2004) as well as for the Red Cross (1998-2004). She routinely attended and led nature programs at local state parks. She loved to travel anywhere but was very content at home. Lana did not have to be entertained and found pleasure in the simplest things and places. She loved family and was a genuine friend to so many, always ready and eager to serve.

But Lana's real legacy lies in her character. In a materialistic society, she basically never asked for or purchased hardly anything. Things meant little to her and she was much more interested in giving than receiving. She was incredibly humble. Though she accomplished so much, she never mentioned any of her achievements. Though earning her doctorate, she never wore the title. She had a submissive spirit. Regardless of her title or position, she always behaved as a servant and elevated the status of others. She genuinely put others first and herself second in her marriage, her work, and everyday life. Many people claim integrity; Lana had integrity. Lana was raised on Biblical principles of absolute right and wrong that she believed, accepted, and applied as the foundation of her life. When faced with trials and challenges, Lana always relied on those foundation principles for

direction and on many occasions took the moral/ethical stand even when facing significant consequences. And, maybe Lana's most enduring and endearing quality was her childlike innocence. Anyone who met her, saw this. Everyone who knew her felt it. It was amazing that a woman who was required to function daily at such a high level with great responsibility (and did so with great success) . . . was governed by the heart of a child. "For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children" . . . Luke 18:16. Lana will be greatly missed and her legacy of love will continue to have great impact on many and will never be forgotten.

On our first date, Lana and I hiked to the top of Table Rock in North Carolina. She introduced me to fall wildflowers I had passed by all my life and she carried a .38 special in her backpack . . . that was Lana. Our last walk was at Osceola Island at the South Holston Dam, one of her favorite places to run. A thousand walks and a thousand talks for thirty years in between. Thank you, Lana for listening to my ramblings. Thank you for tolerating all my eccentricities. Thank you for refusing to fuss and fight. Thank you for being so understanding. Thank you for showing me such respect. Thank you for being so submissive. Thank you for showing me integrity. Thank you for teaching me simplicity. Thank you for trying to teach me that less is more . . . I get it now. Thank you for being a servant, even to me. Thank you for showing me innocence. Thank you for being genuine . . . you always behaved at home exactly how you behaved in public. I will carry your love and your lessons with me in every step of my walk.

Lana was preceded in death by her father Byron Hardin. She is survived by her husband James Hamilton, her mother Florence Brooks, and her brother Joe Hardin . . . and a multitude of individuals she impacted and called her friend.

I am so appreciative of the constant and consistent outpouring of love we received during the months of Lana's illness. Due to the nature of her illness, we were compelled to remain somewhat private and I appreciate your understanding. I would like to extend special appreciation and recognition to Tonya White who sacrificed her life over the past three months to total dedication of Lana's care and became Lana's best friend forever. I realize there are those who have wondered or been confused about the delay in posting this memorial. I apologize, but I have not been well enough physically or mentally to complete this properly until now. This is the most difficult thing I have ever written. Thank you for your understanding.

A private family Celebration of Life Service will be conducted at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 8, 2021, at Central Church of Christ, 2722 East Oakland Avenue, Johnson City, TN 37601.

The Celebration of Life Service may be viewed live by visiting  
YouTube - [www.YouTube.com/channel/UCvBDi9MI-aSYWxUOdD6Inow/videos](http://www.YouTube.com/channel/UCvBDi9MI-aSYWxUOdD6Inow/videos)  
Facebook - [www.Facebook.com/CentralChurchJC](http://www.Facebook.com/CentralChurchJC)

audio live stream - [Gracemine.org/resources/listen-live](http://Gracemine.org/resources/listen-live)

In lieu of flowers, please donate your gift to the Dr. Allana Hamilton Memorial Scholarship Fund at <http://www.tbr.edu/advancement/hamilton-scholarship> .

Thank you so much. Your gift will allow students the opportunity to continue their education in Lana's memory.

# Comments

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“ Lana will be greatly missed.



**LaDonna Miller** - April 08 at 08:35 PM

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“ She was a light. The world lost an extraordinary and beautiful soul.

**Conor Lumb** - April 08 at 12:31 AM

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“ Toni Reeves lit a candle in memory of Dr. Allana Rose Hamilton



**Toni Reeves** - April 07 at 02:30 PM

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“ Monica Ray lit a candle in memory of Dr. Allana Rose Hamilton



**Monica Ray** - April 07 at 02:18 PM

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“ Sandy Stanfill lit a candle in memory of Dr. Allana Rose Hamilton



**Sandy Stanfill** - April 06 at 12:08 PM

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“ Roz Blackwell lit a candle in memory of Dr. Allana Rose Hamilton



**Roz Blackwell** - April 06 at 10:22 AM

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“ First I would like to say to James, all the family, and special friends of Lana that you have my deepest sympathies. It was always one of my biggest dreams to attend college. I had taken a few night course offered by Northeast State through my local high school. When I reached a certain point I made the choice to go on to the main campus located in Blountville. I felt very nervous as I had never even driven that distance before. I was driving from Mountain city. I signed up for my first class which was biology 1 at 8 A.M. I arrived there super early. I felt very intimidated. In through the door comes the most positive, energetic lady I had ever seen. It was Lana and she started the class by saying we are going to learn, have fun, and get 4 opportunities to prove what we learn this semester. These opportunities were our 4 major exams. Immediately I felt at ease. At the end of the term I decided I wanted to hit the ground running mostly due to Lana's inspiration. I signed up for summer classes. There was a Biology 2 course offered. I knew it would be intense due to being only six weeks as compared to a regular semester. I wanted Lana to teach this particular course so badly. At the this time Mrs. Nancy Forester was Dean of Biology so I made an appointment with her to see if there was any possibility that Lana would consider teaching it. The next morning came as we were preparing for finals and Lana comes in and says well I had plan this summer but, seems I am teaching biology 2. She went on to say if a student can drive from Mountain city every day through the week I can drive from Va. Inside I was bursting with happiness. See that was the type of person Lana was. So giving and selfless! I went on to enroll in every class that Lana offered and during two of those semesters I was blessed to be her student assistant. I could not describe in words the value of what I learned from this precious Lady. I also was blessed to receive a scholarship that helped me so much toward my graduation goal nominated by Lana. She encouraged me further by inspiring me to become an officer of Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and a student Ambassador. I felt I could accomplish anything with the confidence she helped me gain. Lana loved nature and I was so fortunate to go several hiking trips with her. I learned so much about animals and plants. She shared funny stories with us. She told us about her first date with James. it was hiking. she said when they arrived at the park she asked him did you bring your protection? If not I brought mine! She went on to say James looks at her in the strangest way like wow this lady is really forward. Of course she was referring to the 38 special she carried in her backpack. She was so incredibly fun. Lana also introduced me to more key people that would play a major role in my continuing education. Two of these people is the amazing Carolyn McCracken and Don Coleman. Two more blessings added to my life When I first learned of Lana's passing I cried myself to sleep that night. All I know to say is Thank you from my heart for everything you thought me and for sharing the precious gift of time with me. I will never forget you. Lana was a true hero and such an inspiration to so many lives. They say that the greatest gift of life is to look back and know that you were loved. Well Lana I can certainly say that you were Loved. God bless you all and I love you. To thine be the Glory. Jarrett.



“ James--I am deeply sorry for your loss. Lana and I were faculty together at Northeast State and our careers crossed paths as we both took other roles and jobs. I will always remember her caring ways and her absolute willingness to help, which will be her enduring legacy to all those whose lives she touched.

Warm regards and many heartfelt prayers,  
Bonny Ball Copenhaver

**Bonny Ball Copenhaver** - March 05 at 08:08 AM

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“ Dr. Hamilton was a genuine, humble, beautiful lady. She made me feel at ease and at home when she did my interview at Northeast State. I immediately loved her. She was an incredible woman, and the world has lost a precious heart. I'm sorry for your loss.

**Sandy Baker** - March 04 at 07:55 PM

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“ I met Lana early in my journey at NSCC when I enrolled in 2006 as a home-schooled teenager with big dreams but a lot of doubts. She was one of the many amazing people at Northeast who inspired me daily during my three years there as a student triple majoring in pre-nursing, psychology, and speech communication. I was always in awe of her energy, enthusiasm, and obvious passion for helping everyone she met. The impact Lana and Northeast had on me is hard to describe...any time I would get discouraged or exhausted during grad school at UTK, I would think back to the wonderful people there who had believed so strongly in me. To this day, the honor of being the 2008 Student of the Year is the highlight of my life and something for which I will always be grateful.

My dad (Mark) became a campus security officer years after I graduated and I would frequently ask him if he had seen Lana and to tell her I said hello. She was one of those rare, unique individuals who not a single person who ever met her will ever forget. She was a lovely, classy, sweet, caring spirit and someone I always deeply respected, admired, and loved. I would like for her family to know the enormous influence she had on me and I am sure thousands of other students she helped over the years. Lana is the ideal which all college educators and administrators should strive to emulate. I will always be incredibly grateful for all she did for me and wish I had been able to thank her in person for how her influence during my early college years affected the trajectory of my entire educational experience and my own philosophy as an ESL instructor in recent years. Her memory will always shine brightly in the hearts of all who knew her.

**Dr. Elaine Henry** - March 04 at 06:38 PM

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“ I was very fortunate to have known Lana since 1991. I met Lana when we (I) needed an adjunct faculty member for the newly formed Biology program at Northeast. She stepped in and was an instant asset to the program and college. She became a full-time faculty member the next year.

I had the distinct honor and pleasure of working with Lana for over 20 plus years. I always jokingly said “she was the second person I hired that I ended up “working” for.” . She was a generous and loving soul, and my friend.

I will dearly miss her.

Chris Lefler

Chris Lefler - March 04 at 04:25 PM

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“ Lana was one of the most incredible people I have ever known. I worked with her and for her at Northeast Tech Community College in Blountville TN. This was my first college teaching job, and she was so helpful, encouraging and patient as I learned how to teach. She was not just a colleague but a true friend. No matter what you faced you knew that Lana would be there for you. The tribute written for her is so accurate. She was a treasure for us who had the joy of knowing her and despite our shock and broken hearts of losing her far too soon she will always live in our hearts until we go join her! She was such a blend of so many great traits but her smile and laugh was always there to comfort and brighten everyone’s day. Her genuine concern for people just drew them to her. One of my fondest memories was going with her and another faculty member to a little outdoor range near Watauga lake and shooting. Lana was so well rounded and lived life to the full. I was so excited to hear of her becoming the president of Jackson state community college and becoming part of TBR. Even though I am still in shock and believe she left us too early, I believe that she is in heaven with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and she is still smiling and wanting all of us to live each day with love and joy and encouragement.

Butch Austin

Butch Austin - March 04 at 10:52 AM

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“ Lana was the “one” who sparked my interest in learning when I returned to college after having my girls. She was an amazing Biology teacher so I took every class she offered. She made science come alive and her passion was contagious. She was and still is my inspiration for teaching. Although Lana excelled professionally and rose to administration, she was the sweetest, most genuine person you would ever meet. I will never forget her support throughout my tenure at NESCC- as a student and faculty member. Allana Hamilton was the epitome of a selfless servant- she gave to so many during her short life. Such a great loss

**Cindy Norris** - March 02 at 08:55 PM

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“ I honestly can not say enough wonderful things about this lady I call my friend! Always smiling and you knew she truly cared for you and everyone she met. I knew her from the time she started at NeSCC, from adjunct faculty to TBR, Lana was the same. Always ready for a big hug! My heart is deeply saddened. My prayers for you, her family! She will not be forgotten! Debi Beverly



**Debi Beverly** - March 02 at 06:02 PM

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“ Mr. Hamilton, I am Allana's cousin. I have never met you, but thank you for the wonderful tribute that you shared with all of us, her family and friends. May God bless you and comfort you and give you peace during this very difficult time. All who knew Allana loved her!

**Carolyn Beach** - March 02 at 12:08 PM

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“ I first met Lana at the Regents Community College Leadership Academy more than two decades ago and we have been fast friends and colleagues ever since. As many have rightly noted, she was a supreme pleasure to work with - not only because of her diligence, her intelligence and her insight, but also and especially because of her humor, smile and sheer joy of life. I have always held Lana in the highest esteem as a leader and educator. I will miss her dearly. My condolences to her family and friends.

**Randy Schulte** - March 01 at 12:33 PM

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“ Behind Weber City Elementary School is the Scott County Tennis Courts circled by a paved walking trail. Often when I would be there practicing or playing tennis, I will see Allana gleefully walking the trail. She had that positive spark about the walks that she exhibit to everything and everyone she encountered. People felt better about themselves by just being around her. I miss that spark and I miss that wonderful person who so willingly gave and gave it.

Garry Grau

**Garry Grau** - March 01 at 12:12 PM

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“ Lana was one of the nicest people I have ever met. I interacted with her at Northeast State and had the honor of her guidance at a difficult time for the library. Everyone always says that they have never heard a negative or unkind word said about her, and it is true. She was always genuinely nice, generous with her time, willing to help, and looking for the best opportunities to support the students and the college. We have all missed her here the last several years, but her influence and expectations are always with us. She will be greatly missed by everyone who has ever met her, even if that contact was brief. My sincere condolences to her family and close friends, who are missing their shining angel.

**Virginia Salmon** - March 01 at 11:29 AM

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“ I have nothing but positive memories of the time I worked in the Biology Department at Northeast State under Lana's leadership. I always appreciated her positive attitude, infectious energy, and genuine support. A true straight arrow and a wonderful person. She will be missed by everyone she encountered.



David Wollert - March 01 at 11:29 AM

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David Wollert - March 01 at 11:21 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



David Wollert - March 01 at 11:20 AM

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“ I first met Lana over the phone in the early 90's. I was at ETSU and needing some science course syllabi to petition the college for substitutions. We continued to collaborate on various higher ed projects and initiatives over the years until I retired in 2017. Lana had a zest for life--she grabbed life by the horns and ran with it! She was always a staunch advocate for students, without ever compromising her high academic standards--she knew if standards and policies were fair and student-centered, students would meet that bar. Lana made us all feel as though we were the most important person in every encounter. She was taken from us and Tennessee Higher Education much too soon, but she has surely earned her rest and peace. I will always feel honored to have known her.

**GLORIA R GAMMELL** - March 01 at 11:02 AM

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“ Such a precious rose that God gave our family and all of Allana's extended family. She is and was as beautiful inside as she was outside. She blessed us all. Thank you God for her 55 years. Prayers for Florence and Joe who are heartbroken.

**Carolyn Beach** - March 01 at 07:38 AM

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“ I first met Lana when we were placed in groups at a THEC meeting in Nashville many years ago. Little did we know at the time, this work would become a five-year commitment to evaluate projects. Each year, Lana, another individual and I would meet at PSCC in Knoxville to complete the work. She was always so engaging and encouraging. I will miss seeing Lana and catching up with her. My thoughts and prayers are with her family and loved ones. Fly high, my friend.

**Myra Peavyhouse - RSCC** - February 28 at 03:42 PM

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“ I first met Allana in 2002 when I started teaching full time at Northeast State. She introduced herself to me and I immediately thought what an enthusiastic, intelligent, happy, and very cute young lady. I have been on committees with her and she was just so excited to be there. Anytime I asked if she could help me with something, she would let me know that she was extremely happy to do so. Lana's smile lit up the world around her and you would walk away from her feeling great about yourself and others around you. She had a unique ability to help restore your soul. Although her passing may be a loss for us all, Heaven has gained a priceless treasure.

Steve Smith

Stephen Smith - February 28 at 03:30 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear of Lana's passing . My prayers are with the family .. May God bless you all!

Janet Looney - February 28 at 09:10 AM

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“ Thoughts & prayers to her mother, Florence & the family.  
Brenda Goodman Fancher

Brenda Goodman Fancher - February 27 at 10:16 PM

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“ My most vivid memory of Lana was during a hike to Mt. Leconte with James, L.A. (James' father) and me, Lamar (L. A.'s brother). It seems that with every plant we encountered she knew the name, the history, and the uses. When I see her in my minds eye she always had a smile. She was much loved and will be sorely missed.

Lamar Hamilton - February 27 at 01:25 PM

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“ I first met Lana in 2001 when she taught biology to some of our Northeast State students who were registered with our office- The Center for Students with Disabilities. She was an excellent teacher and so willing to assist our students. I will always remember her many contributions to our Leadership Development Program. Her enthusiasm, attention to details, and administrative abilities were readily demonstrated to all of us. My last encounter with Lana was at a two-day workshop when she was serving as President of Jackson State. She was always interested in learning new methods for serving students. She even called a mutual friend to check in with me to be sure I was safe after driving back to the college in the snow. She was truly a remarkable, brilliant, caring, dedicated and delightful person who will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

**Betty Mask** - February 26 at 02:12 PM

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“ I loved Lana so much. She's talking with her grandmother Irma now. They are enjoying the beauty of Heaven You are missed

**Betty Beach** - February 26 at 12:26 PM

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“ I had heard about Lana from people I worked with at Jackson State when I was the SAILS DO. They were sad that she had moved on to TBR and missed her dearly, but knew she was exactly the person to be at the System Office to help the largest number of 'kids'.  
Then I had the great good luck to be cubby buddies with her. The short time I was located at the System Office, we early morning arrivers were few and known to one another. Every day that she came to the office, we shared a warm hello and brief chat. I knew immediately why the Jackson State folks missed her. She just had a way of making every person she was with feel valued and always made my day brighter. I have been sad to hear of her passing and hope she knew how special she was including to people she only briefly met.

**Nellie** - February 26 at 10:44 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Robert** - February 25 at 06:04 PM



“ That's Lana!

**Debi Beverly** - March 02 at 06:05 PM



“ Such a accurate picture of Lana. ALWAYS an advocate for the students

**Gail** - March 15 at 12:31 PM

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“ Lana was devoted not only to Northeast State Community College but to each person she worked with. I had the opportunity to be one of her students then later transition to a faculty member in her Division. I have many fond memories of Lana. I will forever cherish them! Her smile will always remain with me! She will be greatly missed!

**Chris Hitechew** - February 25 at 03:12 PM

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“ Lana was a great leader and colleague. I will always remember how wonderful it was to work with Lana on projects. No matter how challenging the project, Lana's positive attitude always made the difference in the outcome. I am grateful for learning from her and benefiting from her spirit of excellence. - Kenyatta

**Kenyatta Lovett** - February 25 at 09:53 AM

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“ Lana was the first instructor that I had ever encountered that made me feel valued. I was fortunate to have been one of her first students in the 90's and she still remembered me and my family 20 years later on a first-name basis. She was an encourager and a light to all who were blessed to know her. As a student, she was the person you hoped to become for others. She will be truly missed, the world is already a little darker without her.  
Melissa B. and Family

**Melissa Brickey** - February 25 at 08:35 AM

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“ Yes, Lana was an outstanding scholar and teacher and leader and boss. But you know what she cared about most? People. She cared about every person she worked with. She was always so concerned that every person felt heard and valued and whether they were having a good day. She made this world a better place.  
Robert D. -- Member of 'Team Lana'

**Robert** - February 24 at 06:24 PM