



## Janet Bennisnus Fair

December 14, 1938 - March 21, 2023

Janet Bennisnus Fair of Huntsville, Texas, passed away peacefully at her second home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on March 21, 2023, at the age of 84. Born in Gary, Indiana, on December 14, 1938, to Thomas Theodore Ott and Nancy Jane (Gamble) Ott, she lived in Huntsville for 50 years.

Janet graduated from Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. While living and working in Cincinnati, Ohio, she met the love of her life, Frank Fair. They were married on February 22, 1967, in Boston, Massachusetts, and shortly thereafter moved to Athens, Georgia, where Frank was a Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia. There, Frank and Janet became involved in the civil rights movement, helping to publish an alternative newspaper, the United Free Press. In 1971, they moved to Huntsville when Sam Houston State University hired Frank as a professor of philosophy.

A lifelong educator, Janet's commitment to teaching and to her students was apparent to all who knew her. She graduated with a B.A. in Humanities from SHSU in 1977, received an M.Ed. in Elementary Education from SHSU in 1983, and received an M.A. in English from SHSU in 1990. From 1979 to 1988, she taught preschool, kindergarten, first grade, and fourth grade at the Community Child Care Center, the Little Red Schoolhouse, Samuel W. Houston Elementary, and Scott Johnson Elementary.

While working on her master's degree in English, she taught composition at SHSU, then taught English and French at Conroe High School from 1989 to 1991, and English at Huntsville High School from 1991 to 2002. She was named the Huntsville ISD Educator of the Month in December 1999 and named Huntsville ISD Teacher of the Year for the 1998-99 school year. In 2002 she was invited to help establish the new Student Advising and Mentoring (SAM) Center at SHSU. She very much enjoyed working alongside wonderful colleagues to help direct students in academic difficulty back on the road to graduation. Her work was so well thought of that in 2011 she received a "Sammy" award from the SHSU Student Government for what she had done for students. She retired from the SAM Center in May of 2017.

Janet also served as a board member for Huntsville ISD and the Community Child Care Center, helped coach softball and the Huntsville High School academic team, and was active in Girl Scouts and at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.

Janet's quick wit and swift retorts made everyone around her laugh. She had the power to charm almost anyone she met. She never let pride get in the way of her being kind.

Janet is survived by her husband, Frank Fair; her children, Kenneth and Joanna Fair; her grandchildren, Nathan and Emma Lupinetti and Emily Fair; and many much-loved in-laws, nephews, and nieces.

Janet's services will be held on Saturday, April 1, at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Huntsville, TX. The rosary will be said at 12:30PM, funeral mass at 1:00PM, reception following, and burial at Mayes Addition of Oakwood Cemetery at 3:30PM. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to the C.O.M.E. organization or Good Shepherd Mission in Huntsville, TX, or especially for those not in Huntsville, Janet supported the

Save The Children organization, which can accept online donations. Memorial condolences to the family may be made at [www.shmfh.com](http://www.shmfh.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Mayes Addition of Oakwood

800 Martin Luther King BLVD  
Huntsville, TX 77320

# Previous Events

## Rosary

APR 1. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

St. Thomas the Apostle  
1323 16th St  
Huntsville, TX 77340

## Mass

APR 1. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Thomas the Apostle  
1323 16th St  
Huntsville, TX 77340

## Graveside Service

APR 1. 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Mayes Addition of Oakwood  
800 Martin Luther King BLVD  
77320



# Tribute Wall



“ I knew Janet Fair both as the wife of an esteemed colleague. Frank, and as the favorite teacher and mentor of my son when he was in HHS. Janet had many fine attributes, among which were humor, compassion, and brilliance. Her faith taught her that these attributes were gifts to be used in the service of the Giver. She was the servant given five talents mentioned in Matt. 25:14-21. We can all take comfort and be inspired, knowing that when she passed into her next life, she heard the words of her Lord: “Well done, my good and faithful servant....come and share your master’s joy.”

Melanie Kercher - April 02, 2023 at 03:42 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Janet Bennisus Fair.



April 01, 2023 at 02:26 AM



“ I am so sorry to hear of Mrs. Fair’s passing. I had the great fortune of knowing her as a teacher and academic team coach for 3 years. Of all her remarkable qualities, I recall her deep and abiding faith in humanity and her matching capacity to fight tirelessly to make the world a better place. She was an absolute warrior for her students - and a happy one. Part of her legacy for me is a challenge to have faith and to fight the good fight. Please accept my deepest condolences

Andrew Russell - March 31, 2023 at 08:35 AM

EM

“ There are no words that can properly capture the lasting legacy Mrs. Fair leaves behind. She changed countless lives for the better through her love, support and teaching, both in and out of the classroom through the decades. She was a true blessing and a bright light to anyone who had the joy of knowing her. Her unwavering support and guidance empowered me through very difficult times and helped me set and accomplish goals I never knew were possible. She made me feel valuable, powerful and limitless. I am forever grateful for Mrs. Fair and hope her family can find comfort and joy in knowing that her spirit lives on in the lives she touched and the gifts she shared of strength, faith, knowledge, kindness and compassion will continue to be passed down through generations.

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**Erin Massingill** - March 30, 2023 at 10:23 PM

GK

“ Gayle Spears Kelly lit a candle in memory of Janet Bennis Fair



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**Gayle Spears Kelly** - March 30, 2023 at 08:20 PM

MM

“ I’m so sorry to hear about Janet. She made everyone feel like her best friend. She was a wonderful friend, inspiring teacher, and a loving person to all who met her. She had the greatest family and I am so grateful for her in my life. Love you and you will be missed.

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**Melissa McCracken** - March 30, 2023 at 05:41 PM

VM

“ Our condolences to you, Joanna, and your family as you cope with your mom's loss. We are thinking of you and are here if you need us  
- Gary and Victoria Mlady

Victoria Mlady - March 30, 2023 at 04:01 PM

NH

“ Nancy Hopper lit a candle in memory of Janet Bennis Fair



Nancy Hopper - March 30, 2023 at 10:49 AM

JJ

“ Happy memories of Janet Fair. Such a sweet lady.

Jeannine Jacoby

Jeannine Jacoby - March 30, 2023 at 09:40 AM

JO

“ Janet was the very best high school teacher, mentor and friend to our son Brad. We feel so grateful for the time he spent in her classroom and outside. I know those memories will be with him for a lifetime.

Judy Olson - March 30, 2023 at 09:37 AM

VO

“ Dear Frank, Kenny, Joanna and family,  
We are so sorry for the loss of wonderful Janet, we share your loss and wish we could be there with you to celebrate her amazing life. We send our love and prayers to you all.  
Love,  
Paul and Vickie Ott and family

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**vickie and paul ott** - March 30, 2023 at 02:55 AM

LF

“ Love always, Paul, Vickie and family purchased the Rose Garden Heart for the family of Janet Bennignus Fair.



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**Love always, Paul, Vickie and family** - March 30, 2023 at 02:23 AM

DH

“ Without a doubt one of my favorite teachers I had in all of my years in Huntsville schools. I had her in 4th grade and the pleasure of getting to have her again in 12th grade. She called out the best in me, understood my humor and was passionate about teaching and mentoring students. The world lost a legend.

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**Darrell Halk** - March 30, 2023 at 12:46 AM

EW

“ I think I can safely say that I would not be the man I am today if I had not had Janet Fair not only as a teacher, but as a mentor. I have had many teachers in my life, many of them great as well, but it's only the Fairs who I would stop by to visit on a Sunday afternoon, years after finishing school.

*There is no one in this world who had the pleasure of being taught by, or working with, or even simply knowing Mrs. Fair who is not a better person for it, and this world is the worse without her light in it.*

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**Erik Weatherwax** - March 29, 2023 at 10:09 PM

CB

“ This was an amazing woman who made me feel safe and seen in her classroom not one but two of my high school years. I remember the unique projects, the creative class arrangements and her never ending joy in helping us grow as students and humans. She will be missed. She is why I am a teacher.

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**Candice Hawkes Bellis** - March 29, 2023 at 08:36 PM



“ I was in Mrs. Fair's class my senior year. She was kind, compassionate, understanding, respectful, and patient. She was tiny in stature, but her personality and experiences made her seem larger-than-life. I have seen comments from so many of my classmates and her former students, all remembering her with such fondness and remarking on the impact she made on them. I hope her family is comforted by the outpouring of love and memories that are shared by those whose lives she impacted throughout her career.

*My thoughts and prayers are with you all!*

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**Angela Stacks** - March 29, 2023 at 05:40 PM

MH

“ *M. Hyvl lit a candle in memory of Janet Bennis Fair*



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**M. Hyvl** - March 29, 2023 at 03:20 PM

NF

“ *Dr. Fair, Kenny and Joanna, I'm truly sorry to hear about my all time favorite teacher. To this day, I credit Mrs. Fair for turning my education around at Scott Johnson Elementary. She cared when others did not. She took me home often in the afternoons and would always let me shift the gears in the little Toyota. I remember she and Joanna helped teach me how to type upstairs on the computer at your house in Spring Lake. Every time I came over she would make grilled cheese sandwiches and helped me on the computer. Many years later when I was asked to be a guest speaker at the SHSU Let's talk event, Mrs. Fair was in the audience with my wife. She looked on and you could tell that the success of her former students meant the world to her. Please know, that your mom, your wife, meant the absolute world to me and will always be one of the reasons I have succeeded. She was a great person and the best teacher.*

*Nate Fountain*

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**Nate Fountain** - March 29, 2023 at 01:37 PM

JF

*Thank you Nate. ❤️*

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**Joanna Fair** - March 29, 2023 at 10:32 PM

LC

“ Always available for her students, but she was also a huge support to her colleagues. I was a brand new teacher and Janet's advice and encouragement meant the world to me. I was never her student, but she has always been my favorite teacher.

*Lea Clark*

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**Lea Clark** - March 29, 2023 at 01:11 PM

JD

“ I had the great honor of teaching with Mrs. Fair during her years at Huntsville High School. Her care for her students, her care for her colleagues, and her great knowledge of her subject matter were unsurpassed. Mrs. Fair was a positive and influential role model for me and her thousands of students and she will be sorely missed. My condolences to the Fair family and all the others that she touched. Love.

*Jim Driscoll*

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**Jim Driscoll** - March 29, 2023 at 01:00 PM

JF

*Thank you so much for these kind words about Mom.*

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**Joanna Fair** - April 14, 2023 at 06:57 PM