



Hannah Justine Block

December 29, 1979 - April 1, 2026

Hannah Justine Block, 46, of Bloomington, Indiana, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on April 1, 2026. Born December 29, 1979, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, she was a beloved wife, daughter, sister, and friend whose warmth, brilliance, and joy touched everyone fortunate enough to know her.

Hannah's love of science set the course of her life. After earning her doctorate and completing postdoctoral study at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, she joined the faculty of the Indiana University School of Public Health in 2013, where she established her own research laboratory devoted to the study of motor control and proprioception. She was a gifted and dedicated educator who worked tirelessly to ensure her students truly understood what she taught, and a committed mentor who invested deeply in the researchers in her lab. Believing that passion for science should be cultivated early, she founded and ran the annual Girls With Nerve summer camp, working to inspire young girls to find their own love of science. Her dedication to spreading her love of science was recognized in 2022 when she received the Outstanding Faculty Mentor/Advocate Award from Indiana University's Center for Excellence for Women and Technology. She leaves behind a thriving research lab and a community of students, researchers, and colleagues whose lives and careers she shaped profoundly.

Hannah's heart was as wide as her intellect. She adored animals - a love that traced back to her early dream of becoming a veterinarian - and never met a cat or dog she didn't want to befriend. She raised two alley kittens, Frank and Joe, found behind her Baltimore apartment, who brought much joy to the household before preceding her in death. It was her love of animals that brought Hannah and her husband together: the two had been chatting online without realizing they lived a short walk apart, until Hannah spotted Matthew Hockenheimer walking his distinctive bright white Samoyed, Sapphire, through the neighborhood. Their very first date was a trail walk with Sapphire, and the rest followed naturally from there. While Hannah did not take Matt's name, both having long academic and professional ties to their birth names, they affectionately and jokingly referred to their blended family as the Blockenheimers. That small joke even made its way onto their return address stamp for years of cards and letters, only occasionally requiring correcting people who believed it had really happened.

Hannah and Matt shared a relationship built on curiosity, creativity, and mutual delight in both interests and loves both shared and learned. They worked together designing and building equipment for her research, and spent countless hours exploring the surprising overlaps between their respective fields - learning from and teaching each other alike. Hannah had a gift for making a home beautiful, with an eye for design and decoration; Matt, though partially colorblind, happily deferred to her vision - hanging what she chose, digging and planting so she could have the flowers and bushes she wanted, and offering a steady shoulder whenever a project hit a snag. The two found particular joy in looking at colorful things together, each describing what they saw, marveling at the different worlds their eyes showed them. Their love of animals, appreciation for each other's sometimes quirky senses of humor, and a shared library of in-jokes from favorite shows kept their life together full of joy and laughter.

Hannah was a devout Christian and a cherished member of Vineyard Community Church of Bloomington. Her faith was a quiet and sustaining presence in her life. She was a lifelong fan of science fiction and fantasy - a Star Trek devotee who delighted in wearing her uniform on special occasions, including the occasional lecture to her students - and held a particular admiration for Captain Kathryn Janeway, whom she found an enduring inspiration as a portrait of strong, capable, and compassionate leadership. She was also an ardent admirer of Tolkien. During her time in Baltimore, she crafted an elaborate, meticulously detailed dollhouse recreation of Bag End and enjoyed writing stories in the setting. She treasured the close friendships she had built from childhood onward, maintaining bonds across every stage of her life with the same loyalty and warmth she brought to everything she did.

Hannah is survived by her husband, Matthew Hockenheimer; her parents, Mary Beth and Walter Block; her in-laws, Ken and Oveda Hockenheimer and Tamra Lewis; her brother, Matthew Block, and his sons Richard and Robert; her beloved dog, Phoebe; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her cherished cats Frank and Joe, and her dear Samoyed, Sapphire. She was a light to all who knew her, and her absence leaves a profound and irreplaceable void.

A visitation will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, beginning at 12:00 PM, with a memorial service to follow at 1:00 PM, at Allen Funeral Home, 4155 S Old State Road 37, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Pastor David Schunk will officiate.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 7. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory
4155 S. Old State Road 37
Bloomington, IN 47401
(812) 824-5905
<http://www.allencares.com>

Funeral Service

APR 7. 1:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory
4155 S. Old State Road 37
Bloomington, IN 47401
(812) 824-5905
<http://www.allencares.com>

Tribute Wall

“ Hanner

Late last week my family was struck by two lightening bolts. My daughter, Hannah, 46, died of a heart attack. Within hours of her passing, my son, Matthew, 48, had to be taken to the hospital for brain surgery in Seattle; thank goodness he is now recovering. It is lucky that his lovely wife, Oksana, was there to whisk him to the hospital, and protect him.

I arrived in Seattle on Monday, 4/13, so I must cancel all of my forthcoming appointments, meetings, in New Orleans; I'll be available electronically. I'm on sabbatical for the academic year 2026-2027. I shall return to NO in August, 2027.

In Memoriam for my Baby Girl

Hannah Block, 1979 – 2026.

She died as an accomplished adult of a sudden unexpected heart attack at age 46. But she will always be my baby girl.

I mean in this obituary to half mourn and half celebrate my baby girl's half-life. She lived until 46 years of age. She should have graced this planet for double that, until 92 .

First, how did she get her name, Hannah? A little background here. My two favorite composers are Mozart and Bach. My son Matthew was born in 1978, 20 months before Hannah. I wanted to name him Wolfgang. My wife vetoed that forthwith. We compromised. His middle name is Amadeus. Then it was Hannah's turn to be named. I wanted Johannah, after Johan Sebastian. Again a compromise. I have been with my wife, now, for 56 years. I think that compromise is one of the many elements we have going for us. She had several nicknames in our family. The usual Hannah Banana, of course. Then, there was Hanner, Madame Sport (she liked Sport Billy as a child), and the Eggspert.

Hannah's favorite book when she was a little baby was Betty Bear. She sat on my lap while I read this book to her. Often. When her second birthday party was about to be held, I asked her if she wanted to invite Betty Bear to this celebration. She looked at me with such scorn and derision and exploded: "Betty Bear's not real." She was undoubtedly thinking that when brains were given out to daddies I must have been at the end of the queue.

Hannah liked to fool her daddy. Long before she could actually read, she announced herself as able to do just that. She would no longer allow me to read this book to her; instead, she would "read" it to me. But she couldn't yet read. Instead, she memorized pretty much the entire story. I know this because she wasn't word perfect. Almost, but not quite. She was a very smart little girl.

Upon one occasion, I think it was when my wife and I were transferring Hannah to middle school, we had an introductory interview with the principal. The question was raised as to whether she would be able to do the schoolwork and keep up with the other students. She was born on December 29th and would have been the youngest child in the class. I announced to the counselor, my wife and daughter, that Hannah would be the smartest kid in the entire school at whatever grade. Hey, it's a father's duty to embarrass his daughter! My two ladies both had very sharp elbows, and I bore the brunt of their wrath.

I also embarrassed Hannah when she was about 10 years old. She got one of her pictures into a calendar on a competitive basis. I purchased 100 copies of it. Daddy!, she said, as she rolled her eyes at me.

I can't help bragging about how brilliant she was. She was the valedictorian in high school, and earned almost all straight A's afterward, at Capilano College and the University of British Columbia in Canada, where we lived at the time. There was one exception: she was given a B in art. Strange; she was also a very good artist and sculptor. She earned an 800, full marks, in a very

difficult provincial mathematics exam. She obtained her Ph.D. in neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University and was tenured as an associate professor in that discipline at Indiana University based upon her research and scholarly publications. I tried to read these articles of hers and can report success: for the first sentence or two

Walter Block - April 16 at 12:12 AM

KJ

“ *I was a friend of Hannah's from high school in North Vancouver. She was a kind, funny, smart and creative person. I'm touched by how many memories people here have shared about Hannah being unafraid to be herself. An admirable quality. Thanks for being a friend, Hannah. My sincere condolences to the Block family and to Hannah's husband.*

Katy Johannson - April 15 at 07:39 PM

TS

“ *I did not know Hannah, but through her father Walter's heartfelt words, which brought tears to my eyes, I feel as if I did. My sincerest condolences to Walter, Mary Beth, and all who knew her. May she rest in peace.*

Tony D. Senatore

Tony Senatore - April 15 at 07:55 AM

JK

“ *Hannah has been a great colleague and scientist. Our labs have collaborated on projects. We all will dearly miss you.*

Jürgen Konczak - April 13 at 02:56 PM

AR

“ Austin R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Austin R. - April 09 at 08:28 PM

MR

“ I've known Hannah since we were about 13 years old, and she was my closest friend that year. While our lives have taken us to different places, we've kept in touch over the years, and would chat around big life events and share funny star trek and batman related things every once in a while, and my appreciation of her thoughtful and hilarious friendship never diminished. What a great and terrible loss for all.



Miriam R. - April 08 at 03:53 PM

AW

“ Aaron W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Aaron W. - April 08 at 07:26 AM

VP

“ Victoria P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Victoria P. - April 07 at 03:39 PM

OL

“ Oksana L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Oksana L. - April 07 at 03:33 PM

DG

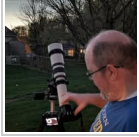
“ I met Hannah in 8th grade. She was wearing a shirt with my dad's favorite composer (J S Bach) and I had to say something. From that interaction, developed a 32 year long friendship through jr high, high school and college and on through our years both living in Baltimore. Hannah was one of the most principled, brightest people I knew and possessor of a dry sense of humor. I wish to offer my condolences to her family. She was a good friend and will be deeply missed.

David Greenspoon - April 07 at 10:45 AM

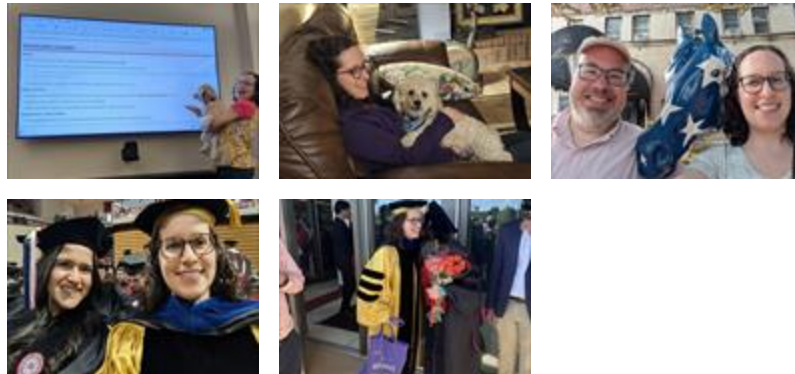


“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

April 07 at 10:37 AM



“ No one's ever going to be like Hannah. She was an amazing woman, an amazing scientist, and an amazing wife. The pain may diminish in time - but I'm never going to stop missing her, nor would I want to, for she deserves to be remembered, as the grief is a reminder of the joy and growth we found together.



Matt Hockenheimer - April 06 at 10:42 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

April 06 at 06:41 PM



“ I am so very sad to say goodbye to Hannah. I worked with Hannah when she was at Hopkins. Her smile, patience, and persistence always inspired me. Her ability to find joy and laugh even amid stressful, high-pressure situations always stood out to me and was so contagious. Her passion for her work was never-ending and always felt so sincere. The world was a better place because she was in it. She will be deeply missed and always remembered. Kathy Zackowski

Kathy Zackowski - April 06 at 05:08 PM

MD

“ Maureen D. purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Maureen D. - April 06 at 02:50 PM

MD

“ Maureen D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Maureen D. - April 06 at 02:50 PM

ML

“ Margaret L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Margaret L. - April 06 at 02:20 PM

YF

“ Your Vineyard Family purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Your Vineyard Family - April 06 at 12:51 PM

RW

“ Ryan W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Ryan W. - April 06 at 12:21 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



April 06 at 10:50 AM

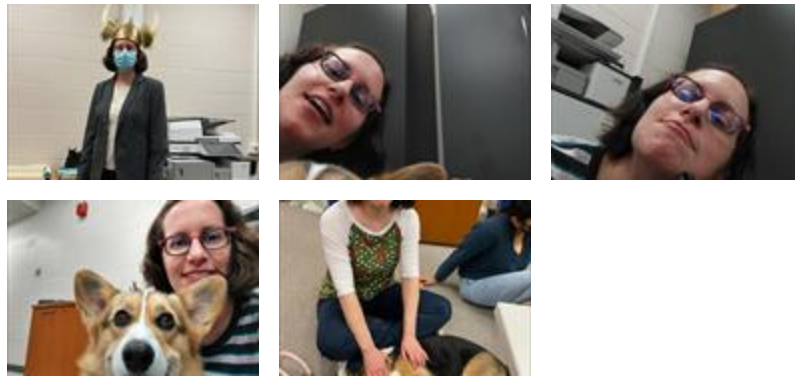


“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

April 06 at 10:50 AM

AN

“ Hannah you're one of my favorite people in this world. Forever inspiring me to be more curious, to be kinder, and to stay nerdy. My last minute application to CEWIT was a rambling essay on how much I loved the brain. I'm sure if I read the essay back, I'd cringe in embarrassment. But I'm so thankful that you saw past the long-winded sentences and recognized my passion for neuroscience because it reflected your own. Joining your lab changed the trajectory of my college experience and allowed me to do things I never thought I'd be able to do. You're the first person I reach out to when something big happens in my life. I'm forever thankful to you. Love you to the stars Hannah.



Anna - April 06 at 08:14 AM



“ I was a high school friend of Hannah and appreciated her kindness and inclusiveness. She was incredibly bright and also such a talented artist, I marveled at her wonderful creations in art class. Her mom and her were very kind to me in grade 12 when my dad passed away and she was supportive during that time. I'm in disbelief at her passing and know she left an amazing legacy through her 46 years, my condolences, shirin kiani

Shir In - April 06 at 07:16 AM

EV

“ I'm so sorry. This is a tremendous loss. I was a lab mate and friend of Hannah's at Hopkins. I always admired her fearlessness to be herself, whether by constructing a hobbit house, wearing her star trek uniform, or taking us all to English country dancing. I will miss her a lot. My deepest condolences to her family and loved ones.

Erin Vasudevan - April 06 at 03:30 AM

EV

“ Erin Vasudevan purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Erin Vasudevan - April 06 at 03:18 AM

EV

“ Erin Vasudevan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Erin Vasudevan - April 06 at 03:18 AM

JH

“ Jung H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Jung H. - April 06 at 12:07 AM

GT

“ Gelsy T. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Gelsy T. - April 05 at 04:54 PM

LD

“ Love from Mom and Dad purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Love from Mom and Dad - April 05 at 03:15 PM

KP

“ Katie Stephan and husband Andy Pickrel purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Katie Stephan and husband Andy Pickrel - April 05 at 03:13 PM

KM

“ Dr. Block was my mentor in teaching with Girls with Nerves. She was kind, caring, and cared deeply about her students.

Kate Miller - April 05 at 01:02 PM

TL

“ Tamra L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Tamra L. - April 05 at 07:35 AM

AB

“ I am deeply saddened at dear Hannah's passing and know that the whole family is heartbroken beyond what words could ever express. Please accept my sincerest condolences and know that I am praying for you daily as you cope with this tragedy. I hope you can take some comfort in knowing that the world is definitely a better place because Hannah lived in it. God's peace to you all. Amy Bowman

Amy Bowman - April 04 at 08:22 PM

BR

“ She was such a great proponent of women in science, and it was a pleasure for me and the students in my lab to learn from her and be a part of her Girls With Nerve over the years. Thanks for your wit and wisdom, Hannah, and for always reminding me to be a mentor first.

Brie - April 04 at 07:03 PM

AB

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Andrea Block - April 04 at 06:53 PM

AS

“ Alan Phipps, Yang Liu, Brandon Sexton planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Alan Phipps, Yang Liu, Brandon Sexton - April 04 at 06:46 PM

FN

“ Friends from Johns Hopkins - Katherine, Jeff, Julie, Mike, Louis, Dennis and Neeraja purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Hannah Justine Block.



Friends from Johns Hopkins - Katherine, Jeff, Julie, Mike, Louis, Dennis and Neeraja - April 04 at 03:15 PM

FN

“ Friends from Johns Hopkins - Katherine, Jeff, Julie, Mike, Louis, Dennis and Neeraja planted a grove of 10 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hannah Justine Block.

Friends from Johns Hopkins - Katherine, Jeff, Julie, Mike, Louis, Dennis and Neeraja - April 04 at 03:10 PM

GE

“ Dear Hannah,

I have many memories of you, but two really stand out.

First, I keep thinking of your laugh -the unstoppable one, even (or especially) in a high-stakes situation. That was so you Hannah! For example, the time you were the keynote speaker at MLMC 2023, you started chuckling halfway during your presentation, in front of a room full of people, and the audience had to join in :)

Second, I have very nice memories of our monthly check-ins during the early years of faculty life. These meetings kept us sane, and I am very thankful for that.

Rest in peace, Hannah... You will be deeply missed...

*With love,
Gelsy*

Gelsy - April 04 at 02:38 PM

AB

“ 1 file added to the album Hannah



Ash Babler-Browning - April 04 at 11:51 AM