At work, she loved lab organization and “bench work,” disliking writing and other paperwork. She especially enjoyed working with undergraduate women to reveal to them the joy of scientific discovery.

From Bonnie Neyens, one of Elizabeth’s teachers in high school:

“Matter of fact yet magical, precise yet playful…sure, confident, a molecular biologist whose fascination with ‘Oz’ lasted a lifetime. Elizabeth was one of the finest students I’ve known. [She] combined… mathematical precision…with [an artist’s] creative ability.

“Elizabeth’s childlike fascination with learning coupled with…[her] work ethic made her the perfect yearbook editor who could organize anything…There was never a doubt…she would finish a project or fulfill a commitment [or] that before she finished she would be planning how to improve the next project.

“Coming from a [talented and intelligent] family…she seemed to feel that excellence was expected…but…was never a burden…Respect for doing something well, the thrill of learning, creating, finding a better way…were part of their everyday existence.

“I don’t pretend to understand death…My mother…said…a person who died young…[is] always remembered as beautiful…If there is any logic to be found in Elizabeth’s death, maybe it is that she will be forever…in our hearts…a strong and slender girl who seemed to glide through life succeeding at everything and reaching for the next challenge. Whatever the case, I’m sure Elizabeth is already making plans for her next project.”

This endowment was created by the Department of Microbiology at North Carolina State University to remember and honor the late Dr. Elizabeth S. Haas, wife and scientific colleague of Dr. James W. Brown. Elizabeth was well known among scientists studying the RNAs of Archaea, and was an integral part of the research and teaching efforts of the Department of Microbiology. She took pride in mentoring and serving as a role model for a continuous stream of young women scientists-to-be, especially during their initial laboratory training.
The Dr. Elizabeth S. Haas Memorial Research Endowment for Women in Microbiology supports undergraduate women doing laboratory research in microbiology before their senior year. Funds are used to underwrite research to encourage labs to bring these students on board.

Remembering Elizabeth...

Elizabeth Suzanne Haas was born on August 17, 1957 in Fort Madison, Iowa, to Donald and Elizabeth (Horn) Haas. She was the third of seven children, three brothers (Joseph, Frank, and Edmund) and three sisters (Marianna, Annette, and Joanne). She grew up on the Lee county, Iowa family farm.

She graduated with a B.S. in Microbiology from The University of Iowa (Iowa City) in 1979, and worked for an additional year as a research technician in the lab of Prof. Erich Six. In 1980 she entered the Microbiology graduate program at North Carolina State University to establish a lab to work on the ribonuclease P of Archaea. Ultimately, Elizabeth and Jim coauthored a total of 21 research articles during their 20 years of working together.

On April 20, 1995, (the day after the Oklahoma City bombing) their son Phillip Edmund Brown was born at Rex Hospital in Raleigh. On Mother’s Day of the following year, Elizabeth was given a cancer diagnosis. Elizabeth died peacefully at home, surrounded by her family, on July 26, 2002.

Elizabeth’s primary hobby was furniture restoration -- she renovated a number of rescued family pieces. She loved the outdoors and always kept a vegetable garden, although she was never happy with the soil from anyplace away from Iowa. She also enjoyed driving about the countryside with Jim in their classic British sports cars.

Elizabeth loved “The Wizard of Oz,” and agreed “there’s no place like home.” She was always very close to her family, returning home every July 4th and Christmas. She was an exceptional organizer, and in the summer of 2001 arranged a weeklong visit to Yellowstone National Park for the entire Haas family.

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