Claudia Marie Pratt (1962-2014), Gardner, ND, graduated from Cass Valley North in 1980. She was involved in numerous activities during her years at CVN including band, choir, yearbook and Hi-Steppers. From CVN she went on to earn a Bachelor of Interior Architecture degree and a Master of Arts degree in Folk Studies, and spent a year doing design studies in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Claudia's creativity was expressed through her work as Exhibit Designer & Program Coordinator for the Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center, Outreach Programs Coordinator for the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Education Director for the Plains Art Museum, and Executive Director for the Nordic Culture Clubs and the Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival, where she was able to integrate her love of Scandinavia with her design and cultural expertise.

Through her consulting firm, CMP Consulting, she provided arts, humanities and museum project development services, creating three-dimensional experiences. She was also a lecturer at NDSU in Museum Studies. Her two collaborative art projects, The sheARTS Project: Art Hats for Breast Cancer Awareness and EXPLORING NOW: 365 Days to 50, helped raise awareness and money for the Art Heals Fund she established at the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation to award grants for art therapy projects in Cass and Clay counties. Throughout her “dance with cancer” she engaged in art as a healing medicine and wanted to give this opportunity to others.

Claudia received several honors including the Award of Merit from the Swedish Council of America in 2007, the YWCA Cass Clay Woman of the Year Award for Arts & Communications in 2012, and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) Leadership in History Award in 2013 for her design of the 30th anniversary exhibit, “The Hjemkomst Sagas: One Dream, A Viking Ship, Many Stories.”

With laughter and an ever-present smile, her courage and imagination inspired people to live in the moment and “have a creative day!” Claudia passed away January 29th, 2014.