Barbara Townsend Merrill

March 19, 1937 ~ November 19, 2014

Barbara Marie Ray Townsend Merrill peacefully left this mortal journey Wednesday, November 19, 2014, after a three-month battle with cancer. Born March 19, 1937 in Idaho Falls, Idaho to Margaret Rachel Middleton and John Alvin Ray, Barbara passed away in Clarkston, Washington, where she lived with her husband, Kenneth Henry Merrill. Barbara leaves a legacy of love and influence in Utah, Arizona, California, Hawaii and Washington.

Raised in Salt Lake City, Barbara made lifelong friends at Longfellow Elementary, Bryant Junior High and East High School. She moved to Ft. Duchesne, Utah, where she completed her senior year of high school at Union High. There, in the Uintah Basin, Barbara continued her pursuits in drama and speech and developed a love and appreciation for the Ute tribe and Native American culture , a love that continued throughout her life.

From 1959 to 1963, Barbara was "Miss Barbara" on the children's live television program "Romper Room." She continued in television and radio for many years as on-air talent in national marketing and advertising activities. Barbara founded and taught at Parleys Preschool in Salt Lake City and was also a real estate agent in the early 1970s.

Barbara's marriage to Ray Townsend created a powerful force for good. Together they loved and nurtured their seven children and extended that love to neighbors, friends, church and business associates and strangers. Moving their family from Salt Lake City to Scottsdale, Arizona in 1973, and then to San Juan Capistrano, California in 1979 where they lived for 23 years, Barbara and Ray were a team. Wherever they were, their influence was large. Their outgoing, positive natures and graceful selflessness were a continuous source of assurance, love and hope to others. All along the way they forged enduring friendships. Ray passed away in 2002.

Following Ray's death, Barbara made her part-time home on the Big Island of Hawaii. There she immersed herself in the culture of the island and service to her many dear friends in the Waimea Ward. Barbara spent time away from Hawaii visiting her children and grandchildren and making a new home near her daughter Kristin in Clarkston, Washington. There she met Ken Merrill, a World War II veteran with personality and a heart big enough to match her own. Ken and Barbara married in 2013.

With her beautiful smile and confident personality, Barbara always welcomed new experiences and was tireless in her acts of service throughout her life, serving, counseling and loving others in personal and direct ways. Whether she was serving as president of the Camino Health Center Auxiliary to raise funds for quality healthcare for uninsured residents in Orange County, or quietly delivering a home-cooked meal to someone in need, Barbara's life abounded in service to others.

Barbara served in various roles within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was a wonderful example of an educated, empowered woman who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ. She energetically served

the women of the Church in several Young Women and Relief Society presidencies, including the California Laguna Niguel Stake Relief Society as president for 10 years.

In the same confident, resolute way that Barbara embraced everything else in life, she left this life with a grateful heart and an abiding, confident knowledge of her Savior.

Barbara is survived by her husband, Ken Merrill; seven children, Steve Townsend (Jenny), Claudia Downs (John), Karen Hale (Jon), Brad Townsend (Cathy), Gregg Townsend (April), Scott Townsend (Juanita), Kristin Folsom (Reid); 29 grandchildren; and 23 great-grandchildren. Barbara is preceded in death by her sister, Jean Summers; husband, Ray Townsend; and dearly beloved granddaughter, Chelsea Hale.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, December 6, 2014 at noon at the Parleys Third Ward, 2625 Stringham Avenue in Salt Lake City. A visitation will be held Friday, December 5, 2014 from 6 - 8 p.m. at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 East 1300 South, and prior to services at the ward from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. Interment at Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Camino Health Center at caminohealthcenter.org/donate/ or the University of Utah Lowell Bennion Community Service Center at umarket.utah.edu/ugive/index.php or Bennion Center, 200 S. Central Campus Drive, Room 101, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.