Nila Stubbs Lee

March 3, 1924 ~ October 29, 2013

Nila Stubbs Lee passed away on October 29, 2013. Her native optimism, boundless energy, and sense of humor allowed her to enjoy life to the fullest.

She was born on March 3, 1924 in Provo, Utah, to John William Stubbs and Ella Louisa Ritchie. A life-changing development was the discovery of a violin in the farmhouse attic when she was a child: a brand new violin with the Sears and Roebuck price tag of $5 still attached. Nila later said, "I was overjoyed. Yes, I could have it and yes, I could stop piano lessons." That was the beginning of a musical career that included a scholarship to BYU where she was concertmistress of the BYU Orchestra. Leroy J. Robertson was her devoted teacher and mentor. He introduced Nila to Maurice Abravanel, the conductor of the Utah Symphony. She auditioned for him, and was offered the position of principal second violinist.

While in the Utah symphony she met a violinist named Robert Lee. After a suitable courtship, he tried a tentative proposal,"I wonder if you would consider marrying me?" and Nila exclaimed, "Oh No!" She explained later that she had planned a trip to New York City. She left on the trip, and Bob, determined to win her, set off from Salt Lake City in his Model A Ford. He repeated his proposal, and this time she said yes. They were married on March 4, 1949 in New York City. Their marriage was later solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple.

Music was a big part of their life. Nila and Robert often invited friends over to play string quartets and the children were lulled to sleep by the beautiful strains of Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart. All nine children studied music, with three each on violin, cello and piano.

In 1965, Robert received an offer to move to India for one year to establish a computer center in Kanpur. They had eight children at the time, and when he asked Nila about it she said, "When do we leave?" Marco, their youngest, was born shortly after their return.

Mothering came naturally to Nila. She gave all her time and energy to nurturing her family. This included morning doses of cod liver oil, and the most nutritious foods money could buy. Her legacy of love extends to her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents and stillborn son Martin Stubbs Lee. She is survived by her husband Robert, children, Susan (David) Andersen, Katherine Cordova, Karl Lee, Lisa (Eric) Evans, James (Kim) Lee, John (Donna) Lee, Richard Lee, Raymond (Shanna) Lee, Marco Lee, twenty-nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. The family expresses grateful appreciation to their sister Sue for her tireless efforts in caring for Mom, and to caregivers Rose, Shelly, and Pam.

Funeral services will be held Monday, November 4, at 10 am, at the Yalecrest Chapel at 1035 South 1800 East, in Salt Lake City. There will be a viewing from 9:00 to 9:45 am prior to the funeral.