Bonnie Lee Holt Vail

April 23, 1927 ~ December 29, 2015

Bonnie Lee Holt Vail, our mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister-in-law and friend died Tuesday, December 29, 2015, on her 70th wedding anniversary, surrounded at home by her children and their families. We know she is celebrating with dad at last. Mission accomplished.

Bonnie Lee Holt was born 23 April 1927 to Curtis Garfield and Maria Katherina Meng Holt in Tulsa Oklahoma. When Bonnie was three years old, her family moved to the Seattle, Washington area, where she grew to maturity. She loved animals, family, school and an active social life. She kept her parents on their toes, once by chasing her mother with a garter snake she befriended. She made life-long friends, excelled in school and served as an officer in the local chapter of the International Order of Rainbow.

She graduated from Franklin High School and briefly attended the University of Washington nursing program. Bonnie connected with people, including her siblings' friends. Through her brother, Curtis, she met, Ed, who soon became the love of her of life. They were married Dec 29, 1945 and began the adventures of life together.

While Ed pursued a career as a Marine pilot and then business owner, Bonnie concentrated on welcoming and nurturing four wonderful children by the time she reached her 24th birthday. Over the next 23 years she and Ed welcomed eight more active spirits into their hearts and home, and Bonnie became a master parent. Bonnie's love of people, joyful play, creative activity, music, and learning served her well as she shaped young minds and characters. Bonnie's home frequently served as the center of activity for all the neighborhood children with summertime forts, sledding stops, annual nativity scenes, block carnivals, parades, and art activities that always included unlimited supplies of clay and paint.

In between cooking, cleaning, forts and sledding, as a remarkable seamstress and gardener, she somehow found time to make most of her seven daughters' clothing and to plant beautiful flowers. Her crocuses seemed to be the first to push through the early spring soil. Family and friends anticipated her homegrown and homemade fruit leathers every summer. Her children and their friends rushed home on weekly bread-making days to warm slices slathered with butter and homegrown and homemade raspberry jam, and maple bars made from left over bread dough. Bonnie made each holiday a time of tradition and love. At Easter and Thanksgiving, she gathered her family and always friends in need. She served the biggest ham or turkey in the city, and expressed her gratitude for her blessings all the while managing a small army of children. She found ways to make Christmas magical with stocking delights and unexpected treasures under the tree, a tradition all of her children continue.

In 1958, two missionaries from the LDS church knocked on her door. With an open heart, she embraced their message and subsequently raised her family with deep spiritual insight and commitment. In addition to raising her large family, she served in leadership positions in each auxiliary organization. She continued to serve faithfully in

her ward and downtown member locator callings until 5 weeks before her death. She loved serving.

Ed and Bonnie moved to Utah, into the wonderful Yalecrest neighborhood, in 1971. Three years later their first three grandchildren and youngest child arrived within weeks of each other. At the same time, Bonnie coached softball, ran a nursery, and became a real estate agent and watched her oldest child graduate from BYU.

By daily example, Bonnie passed on her love of games, her curiosity and love of learning, her delight in music and humor, and most of all her devotion to people.

As her family grew older, her children and their friends often played Rumikub, Speed-Uno, Cribbage or Pinochle games late into the night. When you married into the Vail family, you learned Pinochle. Bonnie was hard to beat, even into her 80's. And she always kept a toy closet full for her younger grand and great-grandchildren.

She believed in education. To her credit, eleven of her children attended college, nine graduated from the University of Utah and one from BYU. Five went on to receive Masters or Doctorates and include one professor, three engineers, two teachers, one lawyer, two business owners, two professionals, and one of Utah's top patent holders.

She loved music and humor. When she was a young mother, Bonnie received a small inheritance and used it to purchase an upright grand piano. She could not read a note, but she made sure her children could. Sundays and holidays found the entire family singing around the piano. Her children played the piano, the violin, the flute, the cello, the clarinet, the viola, and sang in school and local choirs. During her last days, she requested her favorite songs and pieces to calm her cancer-weary nerves. However, she kept her sense of humor. This past week, when she could barely be understood, Bonnie tried to communicate three times with her daughter, Liz, who sat nearby, holding her hand. As Liz leaned in very close to understand Bonnie's words, Bonnie whispered, "Boo!"

With humor and commitment, Bonnie worked long hours, tirelessly, devoted to family and friends, community and church. In addition to being a remarkable homemaker, she supplemented the family income by working at "The Frosty Shop," Fashion Fabrics, and as an in-home health-care aide, as a driver for Nigerian immigrants, and as a real estate agent. But her family and the people she loved always came first. She devoted her life to their happiness, safety and success.

After Ed died, Bonnie moved from her beloved Yalecrest neighborhood and found many new and wonderful friends in her Graystone Arms neighborhood. Though it took a little getting used to, she lived on her own, without parents, spouse, or children, for the first time in her life, and loved it.

She continued to welcome family and friends into her new place. Throughout her life, Bonnie and Ed opened their home and hearts to their children\s friends as well as their own. We will miss her. We will have the legacy of her love and spirit to nurture us until we meet again.

Survived by her children, Bonnie Lee Paxman (Craig), Sandra Louise Western-Butler (Richard), Allison Dewey Sadr (Ali Javadi), Edwin Field Vail III (Diane), Cathryn Amelia Graham (Richard), Eric Field Vail (Julie), Michael Alexander Vail (Connie), Elizabeth Marie Ashworth (James), Ian Mark Vail (Gabriela), John Matthew Vail (Suzzanne), Sarah Ann Carlson (Phillip), Shannon Kerry Vail (Ian Allen); 51 grandchildren and 59 great-grandchildren and their spouses; and brother and sister-in-laws, Roger Allen and Charleen Vail, and their children. Preceded in death by her husband, Edwin Vail; her father and mother, Curtis and Marie Holt; siblings Geneva Holt Ulbrickson, Elouise Holt Wheeler, and Curtis G. Holt, Jr.; nieces and nephew, Michelle Holt O'Harra, Karen Ulbrickson Meyer and Christopher John Vail.

The family would like to thank Dr. Doane, Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Freedman and Brenda Fish, Dr. Rushton and their nurses and staff for watching over Bonnie's health for many years; the doctors and nurses and other care givers at University Hospital; and Dr. Tantravahi Huntsman Cancer Center and Brighton Hospice who gently and kindly diagnosed and assisted her in her final days.

Funeral services will be held Saturday at 10:00 am at Yalecrest LDS chapel, 1035 S. 1800 E. Friends and family may visit Friday evening, January 1, from 6:00 , 8:00 pm and Saturday morning, January 2, from 9:00 , 9:45 am , one hour prior to funeral services.