Phyllis Jean Gaarsoe

March 26, 1922 ~ July 18, 2019

Our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Phyllis Jean Newman Gaarsoe, passed away on July 18, 2019.

Phyllis was born March 26, 1922, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Francis Newman and Jennie Eastlyn Newman. She married her husband of 56 years, Berny Gaarsoe (now deceased) on December 3, 1942, in Great Falls, Montana. Berny was in the Army Air Corps and before his transfer to Great Falls, he was stationed in Salt Lake at the fairgrounds. Phyllis had a brief first encounter there with her future husband while horseback riding. She lived near the fairgrounds and often rode the horses that were available to rent there. One day she got stuck with an old nag and rode past the soldier who had rented her favorite horse. That soldier was Berny. Not long after that, they met and introduced themselves at a USO dance where Berny monopolized all of her time (against USO rules). While Phyllis was a very good dancer, sometimes organizing dances for the soldiers with her friends, Berny would admit he wasn't the greatest dancer. But that didn't stop them from becoming charmed with one another and before long the two were engaged, he was transferred to Great Falls, and she got on the train to Montana to marry the love of her life.

Phyllis attended West High School and LDS Business College and aspired to be a journalist. After high school she worked at Fisher Baking Company and Christensen Diamond Products as a bookkeeper and payroll clerk and often talked about how much she enjoyed those jobs and the friends she made there. While she wrote many letters to the editor throughout her life, she chose to set aside the goal of a career in journalism and focus on taking care of her husband, raising her children, and helping to raise her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who would all agree that she was the best grandma anyone could ever have. While raising her children, Phyllis was also very active with the LDS church, teaching Sunday school, serving in the Relief Society presidency, and reading about LDS church history and her ancestors. She was very interested in politics (often calling talk radio programs to share her opinions), and loved to garden (once receiving an award for the best yard in Rose Park). She was an avid reader and instilled a love of reading in her children and grandchildren with frequent visits to the library. She had many family gatherings on holidays and birthdays, summer parties in her backyard, and an open door to the neighborhood kids. Her family could never get enough of her home cooking, especially her made-from-scratch cakes and cookies. Always the devoted grandma, she loved getting visits from the great-great-grandbabies even after her memory declined.

The family wishes to thank all of the wonderful caregivers at Legacy Village Memory Care in Taylorsville who cared for our mom/grandma in the last years of her life. They always treated her like one of the family and we are so grateful to them. We also want to thank her caregivers at Canyon Creek Assisted Living and Sunrise Senior Living

in Sandy who also cared for her before she moved to Legacy Village.

Phyllis is survived by her son Berny, daughter Kris, sister Luana Hughes, sister-in-law Donna Newman, daughters-in-law Marj and Karen, 9 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Berny, daughter Karen, son Greg, grandchildren Alice and Ricky, great-grandson Cody, brother Lynn, and sisters June and Janice.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, July 27, 2019, at 11:00 at Larkin Mortuary, 260 East South Temple. Viewing will be held one hour prior to the service. Interment will be at Mount Olivet Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Alzheimer's Association are suggested. For the full obituary and to send condolences, please go to www.larkincares.com.