Helen Bay Gibbons

November 4, 1921 ~ August 2, 2015

Helen Bay Gibbons, our sweet wife, mother, and grandmother, 93, died peacefully at home on August 2, 2015, in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was born on November 4, 1921, in Junction, Utah, to Horace Earl and Iola Maxwell Bay, the oldest of eight children. Helen's father was Junction's bishop, the town's postmaster, and the owner of a business that included a small store, a motor court, and a gasoline pump where Parco gas was sold. From her earliest years, Helen was accustomed to assuming heavy responsibilities working in the family business. Because of the example of her parents in nurturing the members of the ward where her mother served as the Relief Society president, Helen learned to be compassionate and helpful to all, a quality that was evident throughout her life.

In the late summer of 1943, Helen was called to serve a mission to the Southern States. She was assigned secretarial work in the mission office, served with exuberance, and traveled extensively throughout the mission.

She was married in the Salt Lake Temple on June 7, 1945, to her beloved sweetheart, Francis Marion Gibbons, during his 10-day leave from WWII naval service. Following WWII and Frank's schooling at Stanford University, Helen and Frank made their home in Salt Lake City, where Helen was a stay-at-home mom nurturing their four children.

During the 1960s, Helen expanded her interests into writing, becoming associated with the national Pen Women organization, where she won awards for her writing. She did her writing during odd moments during the day, often with children playing on the floor around her writing desk. During this period she had two books published commercially. Her writing skills resulted in her being called to write manuals for Church classes. This, in turn, ultimately led to her membership on the Sunday School general board. Later she was called to the general boards of the Young Women, the Melchizedek Priesthood MIA, and the Relief Society. These calls entailed extensive travel throughout North America, Mexico, and South America. During the years Frank served in the Seventy in South America, Helen always accompanied him to stake conferences, where she conducted training sessions with the auxiliary leaders.

In 1976 Helen enrolled as a first-quarter freshman at the University of Utah. Over a period of nine years, dividing her time between maintaining the household, attending university classes, and serving on the general boards, Helen completed her university training, graduating in 1985 magna cum laude, Phi Kappa Phi.

She is survived by her eternal companion of 70 years, Francis Marion Gibbons; her children: Suzanne Burton (Tim), Mark (Shari), Ruth Stoneman (Allen), and Daniel (Julie); her siblings: Bud, Mary Ellis, Paul, and Phil; 18 grandchildren and 38 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by three siblings: Bernice Glad, Elvon, and Bette Jo.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, August 8, 2015, at 11:00 a.m. at the Ensign Stake Center, 135 A Street, Salt Lake City, Utah. A viewing will be held on Friday, August 7, 2015, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E. South Temple and the day of the service at the church from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. She will be interred at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, 1342 East 500 South, Salt Lake City.

(Note: South Temple will experience traffic closures on Friday evening from 4:00 until 7:00 p.m. due to the Tour of Utah cycling race. Before 7:00 p.m., access to Larkin Mortuary is available from 300 East, coming off of 100 South.)