Susanne Washington Brown Gordon

December 19, 1930 ~ February 26, 2017

WHAT A REMARKABLE WOMAN!

A women's rights and political activist before it was fashionable.

Born Susanne Washington Matthews, December 19th 1930 in Wheeling West Virginia to Edward Washington Matthews and Elsie Wagner Matthews. Susanne (Sue), was a direct descendant of Lawrence Washington, brother of President George Washington.

At the tender age of 12, Sue became a student at The Shipley School, which at the time, was an all girls boarding school in Pennsylvania. After completing her senior year there, she went on to attend college as an English major at Simmons College and later, Barnard College. In 1952, Sue married Edmund D. Cook, in Colorado Springs, CO. After living in Colorado Springs, Chicago, Pittsburg and Denver, they moved to Salt Lake in 1959.

Sue and Ed divorced in 1967, however, together they had three children; Geoffrey (Lynda) Cook, Jennifer Cook and Michael (Dana) Cook; four grandchildren: Parker (Kate) Cook, Nicolas (Jenessa) Cook, Alexandria Cook, Skylar Cook, and two great-grandchildren, Nicolas Bair Cook and Piper Rose Cook; all of whom genuinely adored her. Sue welcomed, loved and is also adored by many step-grandchildren: Beau (Janae) Scott, Taylor (Amy Scott), Derek Scott, Mackenzie Scott, Haley Scott, Ashley (Rich) Bennett; and step-great-grandchildren: Elle and Gabe Scott; Logan and Miles Scott and Abigail, Jaxson, Lola and Gracie Bennett; affectionately earning the nick name "KAG" for KickAssGrandma.

During the years as a single mom, Sue managed the task with great fortitude, wisdom and humor. Once claiming to have "Eyes in the back of her head", she demonstrated it by securing a roll-around plastic eyeball from a stuffed animal to the back of her head, then forgot it was there and went to the supermarket where she was the recipient of many strange looks. Upon realizing what everyone was looking at, she was quite proud to have given everyone something to talk about.

Sue married William H. Brown in 1969. Their marriage lasted until his passing in 1994. They were a well-matched couple, working side by side for many years in Bill's practice of physiology. Sue fully embraced her role as a Psychologist's wife. She served as President of the Utah Chapter as well as Regional Vice President of the National Mental Health Association. She also served on many other National Mental Health Association committees. Bill had five children from a previous marriage, Pat, Mary, Bob, Tom and Nancy, whom Sue proved to be a kind and supportive stepmother to and maintained close relationships with most of them until her passing.

Sue broadened her passion in mental health, to help young people as a probation officer for the juvenile court system. She was a fierce advocate for promoting mental health awareness, and worked tirelessly to educate lawmakers and support legislation that would improve mental health services.

In late 1999, Sue found love again with Oakley Gordon. After being friends for many years, they found themselves mutually widowed, and decided, "what the heck" and tied the knot on March 1, 2000. Sue and Oakley had an intellectually deep and light-hearted relationship, which ended far too soon as Oakley passed away suddenly in 2002, leaving Sue widowed once again. This union brought Sue tremendous joy, as she was able to form close and loving relationships with Oakley's grown children, Bill (Shannon) Gordon, and Oakley Jr. (Betsy) Gordon, grandchildren Pete (Adrienne) Gordon, Heidi (Clark) Taylor, and great-grandchildren, Ben, Christopher, Thomas, Brayden, and Spencer.

A frequent contributor to Columnists Robert Kirby and Paul Rolly, she was politically astute and always involved. Sue a member of the Salt Lake Junior League and as well as an active member of the league of Women Voters. She held many meetings for the "Bench Bunch" in her home, and was always active in supporting the league. She was also a member of "Martha's Luncheon" formally known as "Waffle", a group of intellectuals, who met bi-weekly to discuss current affairs and community issues. Many many major political figures, community leaders and business owners attended the meetings as guest speakers to address this small but prestigious, politically influential, collection of business leaders, retired judges, philanthropists and political activists.

Sue was intelligent, personable, and easy to talk too. She was your friend the minute you met her. Always willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. But if she found you dishonest, she was able to intellectually dismember you with surgical precision in such a graceful manner that you would be compelled to thank her for it.

An avid Golfer, Sue was a member of the Fort Douglas - Hidden Valley Country Club for many years. She played several times a week and had many friends in the golfing community. The ball she hit was not too long, but always straight. When asking Sue for advice on how to improve your golf game, she frequently used the phrase "Thy good drive will get thee not, if thy F#%kest up thy second shot"

Sue had hundreds of books in the shelves of her home and most likely read everyone of them. She was sharp as a tack and made sure she stayed that way through intensive reading and crossword puzzles. A special thank you to Rich Merrill who helped ease the pain of aging for Sue through his therapeutic massages, political discussions and gripe sessions. You helped stimulate her mind and kept her critical thinking skills sharp.

A loving mother, passionate community citizen, and great friend, Sue will be missed immeasurably by all those who were fortunate enough to have known her. When someone like Sue departs from the world, it leaves a significant hole in the lives of those she shared hers with. However, she would not put up with our mourning, so with that in mind, a memorial parade will take place at Mount Olivet Cemetery on June 10th, 2017 at 11:00 am followed by a celebration of life party at her residence.

In lieu of flowers please donate to your favorite charity in memory of Sue.