

Janet Rae Bennett

October 6, 1932 ~ July 5, 2020

Janet Rae “Jan” Bennett passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 5th, 2020, at the age of 87. Janet was born in Portland, Oregon on October 6th, 1932, the daughter of Stephen Loren Huff and Melba Sperry Stout. When she was a young girl, her family moved to Salt Lake City where she lived during much of her childhood. They later relocated back to the Pacific Northwest, living in Port Angeles, Washington and settling in Vancouver, Washington along the Columbia River.

Janet attended the University of Washington in Seattle, where she studied Art History. While attending school, she was introduced to and married Gerald R. Petrey, with whom she had three children: Mark, Karee and Creighton. They resided in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and in the areas of Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan. After 17 years of marriage, Jerry and Janet divorced. On December 30th, 1968, Jan married Michael J. Bennett, whom she met while living in Pennsylvania. They developed many dear and lifelong friendships during their years in Pittsburgh. Michael and Jan later moved to Salt Lake City, Utah to be near Michael’s seven children, whom she loved and embraced as her own. They resided in the Gilmer Park neighborhood for close to fifty years. Theirs was a beautiful and boisterous family of ten children combined, which brought to her life all the mishap, adventure and drama of such a crew, as well as an abundance of laughter, music and joy. Jan loved her family to overflowing and was often moved to tears by a simple phone call or visit.

Jan lived a full life and was very active in the Utah community. She worked for many years as Assistant State Director for Senator Orrin Hatch as well as Senior Policy Advisor and Deputy State Director for Senator Robert Bennett. She was passionate about advocating for women in business and politics, locally and nationally, serving as chair of the Governor's Commission for Women and Families, President of the Women’s State Legislative Council and the Utah Federation of Republican Women, and Vice President of the Professional Republican Women of Utah. In this capacity she helped organize the Centennial Summit for Utah Women to endorse and support political legislation for women’s issues on both sides of the aisle. She continued to chair the Utah Women’s Conference and the Senior Conference hosted by Senator Hatch for many years as well co-chair state organizations for child abuse and crime prevention.

Jan’s deep appreciation of the arts and music inspired her longtime involvement with the Utah Symphony Guild, where she served as president for a season. She sat on the board of directors for the Utah Chamber Artists, was chair of the Utah Humanities Council and acted as cultural liaison for Senator Robert Bennett. Jan helped found the Salt Lake Children’s Museum, as both chair and board member. She and Michael made frequent and generous donations over the years to numerous organizations, including the Utah Symphony, Utah Chamber Artists, Babcock Readers Theater, Utah Shakespeare Festival and the Hale Center Theater, all of which enriched their lives. In

earlier years, Jan took an active part in local theater, performing for many seasons in musicals such as Promised Valley, Carousel, and Mame. She was awarded many honors throughout her life, including Utah Woman of the Year, Who's Who in the West and the Hearts and Hands award from the Humanities Council for her tireless support of Utah arts and culture. Jan was proud of her pioneer heritage and was an active member of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. As a devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she held numerous callings, including Young Women's President and Relief Society Counselor. A highlight for her and Michael was their three years of service in the Salt Lake Inner City Mission.

Jan had impeccable taste, with an eye for all things beautiful. From antiques and art, silver and crystal, to acorns and flowers; she set a most elegant table. She loved road trips with Michael and delighted in stops at small markets and shops along the way. She filled her home with treasures from her travels and gave all of her family an appreciation of the lovely things around us. Jan was an accomplished artist and painter. She enjoyed capturing scenes of nature in landscapes and floral still life. Her favorite pastime was wandering through her yard, tending her gardens and observing the birds and squirrels in the trees. In later years, as her eyesight declined, she still managed to delight in the simplest of views with her limited vision. She unfailingly sought for beauty and found it.

Jan loved generously and was genuinely interested in those around her. She knew how to make everyone feel welcome and included in her gentle, Christ-like way. She was quick to laugh and even quicker to observe- often the first to compliment and offer comfort, support and encouragement. She was ever warm, diplomatic and engaging and she was the epitome of class and grace.

Jan will be dearly missed by her family and friends. She is survived by her brother Stephen (Diane) Huff; children Michele Bennett, Mark (Jacque) Petrey, Christopher (Angelika) Bennett, Karee Petrey (Scott) Cannon, Hal (Claudia) Bennett, Rose-Marie Bennett (Gordon) Smith, Franklin (Alison Barker) Bennett, Nick (Jen) Bennett, Creighton (Tricia) Petrey and Geoffrey (Tiffin) Bennett; 35 grandchildren; and 61 great-grandchildren. She was recently preceded in death by her husband, Michael.

A heartfelt thank you to Legacy House of Farmington and nurse, Jacque, for their care of Jan during the past few months when the family could not be by her side.

A private family graveside service will be held on Tuesday, July 14th, 2020 at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Utah Symphony Guild (www.utahsymphonyguild.org), or any of the many organizations dear to Jan and Michael.