Erma Colleen Gabbitas

January 15, 1948 ~ April 9, 2014

Erma Colleen McDonald Gabbitas passed away April 9, 2014 having lived a vital and productive life and after a valiant fight with cancer. She was 66 years old.

Throughout her life, Colleen embodied strength, sass, humor and joy in the simple things. Colleen often said that one has a choice as how to accept the setbacks in life and despite them, she chose to be happy and to \"Just go with the flow\".

She and husband Vern spent many wonderful years with their friends camping. They both enjoyed the beauty of Utah's mountains and wilderness and the companionship of their fellow campers were a source of pleasure and comfort for them both. Colleen was deeply attached to her community and described many happy evenings sitting out on her front porch people watching, talking and laughing with her neighbors.

She played an integral part in the lives of her young granddaughters Samantha and Madison and relished her role as the \"K.D.C. Dance Grandma\" and watching her grand-daughters drag racing.

Colleen enjoyed many happy years of marriage with her husband Vern and found peace at the end of her life with the knowledge that she was joining her eternal companion.

Colleen graduated from East High School and Brigham Young University with a degree in Social Work. Her church callings included Temple Worker, Relief Society Presidency/Teacher and Young Women\s Presidency.

Colleen had a distinguished career working at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. and as Director of the Provo office of visiting home services and with the Utah Department of Corrections for over 30 years. She retired as a Deputy Warden. Despite working with difficult and troubled individuals, Colleen never lost her faith in the inherent goodness of people.

Notwithstanding her many professional accomplishments Colleen\s greatest happiness came through her close family. She was a devoted daughter, sister and aunt. She was a doting mother and grandmother cherished by her daughter, step daughters, step son, grandchildren. step grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She was the daughter of A. Melvin McDonald and Lucile Merrill McDonald (deceased). She was the 5th of six children. Amos (deceased), Carolyn McDonald Shipp (Royal), Robert Merrill McDonald (deceased), Andrew Melvin McDonald (Cindy) and Kathleen McDonald Sheen.

She was married to Vernon F. Gabbitas (deceased). She is survived by her daughter Jenica Gabbitas Laws(Tory) and step children Chuck Gabbitas (Moshit), Michelle Goettling (Tom) Mary Elwood and Terra Gabbitas (deceased). Two grandchildren Samantha Laws and Madison Laws, 14 step grand-children and 13 great grand-children the Family would like to thank all the caring and devoted doctors, nurses and staff of the Utah Cancer center and the amazing staff of CNS (hospice).

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 19, 2014 at the Crescent 23rd Ward, 10375 South Leilani Drive, Sandy. Friends may visit with the family from 6-8:00 p.m. on Friday, April 18 at Larkin Mortuary Riverton located at 3688 W. 12600 S., and also on Saturday from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the church. Interment to follow services at Larkin Sunset Gardens. Online condolences may be shared at www.larkincares.com