Margarete Stahl Wilkin Hicken

October 15, 1906 ~ December 5, 2013

Margarete Elisabet Stahl Wilkin Hicken, age 107, passed away peacefully on December 5, 2013, less than two months after hosting her own, lavish birthday celebration in her home. While her bright personality, keen mind and quick wit were as sharp as ever, her body could no longer keep up with her pace of life! Known by the nicknames "Maggie," "Margee" and "Gretel," she was loved and admired by those of every age and background who were forever enriched by her active interest in them and her presence in their lives.

She was born on October 15, 1906, to Emilie Auguste Labb√© and Emil Eugen Stahl in Pforzheim, Germany. While she grew up in the throes of WWI, she was raised with opportunities to be well-educated and develop talents in both academics and the arts,Äîfrom music and dance to cooking, sewing, gardening and baking (yes, she still made her famous German Christmas cookies just last year!). While she endured the deaths of two young siblings early in life, and lost her brother, Artur, in WWII, she shared many happy years with her younger sister, Nelly, and her mother, who both moved to the U. S. later in life. Margarete would return to Pforzheim only once during her lifetime, as her historic hometown was 80 percent destroyed by the bombs of WWII. During her one return visit in 1936, she attended the \"Nazi Olympics\" in Berlin, saw Hitler march into the stadium to proclaim the Games' opening, and witnessed his devastating influence on her homeland. It made her anxious to return to her \"new home\" in America.

While her family advised her it was \"crazy,\" Margarete immigrated to Utah at the young age of 22, and lived at the Beehive House while attending West High School. A convert to the LDS Church, she became a member of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir soon after coming to Utah, and remained so for more than 10 years. In celebration of her 100th birthday, the Choir honored her as its oldest living former member. She described the musical tribute as \"awesome!\"

Margarete\s lifelong commitment to hard work began when she apprenticed in her family\s jewelry-making business. She later found Depression-era jobs making radio parts, doing dress-shop alterations, and working at Auerbach\s, Bon March√© and ZCMI. In 1939, at age 33, she became a \"comptometer operator\" at Utah First National Bank (which became Zions Bank). Her skill in operating this unique banking \"adding machine\" launched a rewarding career that would span more than 30 years and foster many enduring friendships. She retired in 1971 at age 65, when she saw her job \"being taken away by computers!\"

In 1941, Margarete married George Robert Wilkin, a former WWI British Army officer. For 37 years, until his passing in 1979, they enjoyed a marriage highlighted by travel, dances at the Hotel Utah, and swinging with the "big bands" at Saltair. They lived throughout their marriage in an apartment near downtown, which allowed Margarete to walk to and from work "for daily exercise." With exercise always a priority, she swam at the YWCA pool twice weekly for more than 30 years with her "Popcorn Club" friends, quitting at age 99 only because the pool closed!

She was also a modern dancer for more than a decade with the Virginia Tanner program.

Five years after George's death, Margarete married retired surgeon Dr. N. Frederick "Nif" Hicken. They enjoyed 14 years together until Nif's passing in 1998 at age 98. His friends and family became important to Margarete, and have remained so throughout her life. Together, Margarete and Nif contributed generously to the U of U's Health Sciences Center to benefit faculty and students where he received his training.

Margarete was an inspiring example not only for living 107 years, but also for living them so fully with a positive and adventurous spirit! She is survived by her dearest and devoted friend, Art Swindle, whose years of affectionate care and support enabled her to continue to enjoy an independent, fulfilling life in her own home. Her special friends Mary Sherwin, Maureen Madrian, Bonnie Evans, Suzanne Pisciotta, Cathleen Frome and Tresha Kramer also provided treasured companionship, and she appreciated the loving care provided by Dr. John Doane and Dr. David Petron. While she had no children of her own, Margarete's multitude of doting friends and family in the U.S. and Germany include Dr. Hicken's grandchildren and their families: Susan (Dale) Sundwall; Andrew (Wendy) Adamson; Amy (Bruce) Tingey; David Adamson; J. Fred Adamson (deceased), and many dear cousins, nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Tues., Dec. 10, at 11 am at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 East 1300 South, SLC, with visitation there on Mon., Dec. 9, from 5-6:30 pm, and one hour prior to the services. Gifts in Margarete's memory can be directed to the Dr. Nymphus Frederick Hicken, Alta Thomas Hicken, and Margarete Stahl Wilkin Hicken Endowed Chair in Family and Preventive Medicine, c/o U of U Development Office, 540 Arapeen, #250, SLC, UT 84108. Interment: Salt Lake City Cemetery.