Mary Ellen Jex Jolley

April 15, 1926 ~ February 23, 2019

Mary Ellen Jex Jolley made a Hollywood exit. Surrounded by children, grandchildren, and great- grandchildren on February 23, 2019, two months shy of her 93rd birthday, she peacefully slipped away to dance anew with her departed sweetheart, Joel McKay Jolley.

Mary arrived April 15, 1926, in Provo, Utah,Äîthe fifth of James Moses Jex and Celia Clementine Hiatt's eight children. She grew up in the house at the end of the lane, where BYU's George Albert Smith Fieldhouse now stands. Except for older brother Frank's secret killing of her pet chicken, Mary's childhood was very happy. Music, laughter, education, religion, and sheltering the needy were among her family's values. She graduated from Lincoln High in 1944, where she had served as pep club president and made lifelong friends. At age 17, while spending the summer in San Francisco with her brother Lorin and wife Laneeda, she entered a chapel and was immediately smitten upon seeing a handsome dark-haired man in a U.S. Coast Guard uniform seated at the sacrament table. They later married in the Salt Lake Temple on August 26, 1946, at 11:10 p.m.

Schooling took the young couple to Pocatello, Idaho, and Seattle, Washington, as Mary worked to support Joel through pharmacy school. After returning to Salt Lake City with their first of seven children, Mary stayed at home to care for their growing family while Joel finished his education.

Mary's life was devoted to family, church, and community. She enjoyed organizing events that unified, such as family reunions, roadshows, and backyard movie nights. She served in numerous positions in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including chair of the Master M Men and Golden Gleaner programs, gospel doctrine instructor, and Relief Society president. She was a talented teacher, writer, and speaker. She contributed content to the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, helped develop Art Linkletter's Family Achievement Institute, served on the editorial board of the Children's Friend magazine, published lyrics in the Children's Songbook, and trained individuals throughout the world as a member of the Sunday School general board.

What this woman produced with her own two hands was incredible. She could make something out of nothing. Curtains into costumes, flimsy fabric into formal wear, skeins of yarn into slipper socks, discarded jeans to denim quilts, and brothers' old suits into beautiful braided rugs. We never saw her hands being idle while just sitting or watching television. She was always darning, knitting, crocheting, needle pointing, tatting, or hemming. With arthritic fingers, her final days were spent knitting scarves to donate to the fence at Liberty Park.

Her greatest legacy is her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She wrapped each one in her handmade quilts, love stories, and faithful testimony.

She is survived by children Mardy (Pam), Marla (Dick) Jensen, DeAnn (Cary Grant), Dean (Carrie), Bryce (Terry), JoDee (Robert) Baird, and Kennion (Jennifer); 29 grandchildren; and 48 great- grandchildren. She is preceded in

death by siblings Lorin Jex, Frank Jex, Eileen Peay, Betty Sharp, Margaret Moyes, Joyce Westenskow, and Merlene Turner; granddaughter Mary Christine Sadleir; and great-granddaughter MaRee Cowart.

Services to honor this amazing woman will be held Friday, March 1, 2019, at 12:00 p.m., at the Bonneville Stake Center, 1535 E. Bonneview Dr., Salt Lake City, Utah, with a viewing at 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. A viewing will also be held Thursday, February 28, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., at Sunset Lawn Mortuary, 2350 E. 1300 S., Salt Lake City. Interment will be in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

Special thanks to our loving Inspiration Hospice nurse, Wendy Selmos, and harpist extraordinaire, Chaplain Keri Riker.