

Ardis Macfarlane

October 6, 1932 ~ August 10, 2025

Ardis Isabell Erekson Macfarlane passed away peacefully Sunday, Aug. 10, 2025. She was born Oct. 6, 1932, to William Shirley Erekson and Jennie Elaine Wright, the second of four children (Shirley, Ardis, William Benbow, and Elaine). “Without family, what is there?” was the motto she lived by, shared by her mother.

Ardis was born in a modest and loving home—with dirt floors and an outhouse—in what was then the “country” (now Murray, Utah). Her parents ran a family-owned mink and fox farm. She spent her time helping her mother, doing chores, playing outside, and dressing up with her sister and best friend, Shirley. Of course, the older sisters doted on Will B and Elaine. Ardis spoke of getting a hand-carved toy under the Christmas tree and having just one dress for church on Sundays.

Ardis was the editor of her high school newspaper and the 1953 Utonian, the University of Utah’s yearbook. She was also vice president of her junior class at Alpha Chi Omega, her college sorority, as well as the social chair and secretary.

Ardis had an innate gift of style and class. Starting in elementary school, she was asked to pose for newspaper advertisements and articles—because of her natural beauty and gracious manner. This continued through college, culminating in a half-page feature in her wedding dress, announcing her engagement.

On September 17, 1952, Ardis married Grant Macfarlane Jr. in the Salt Lake Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the beginning, Ardis and Grant were a perfect match in many ways—loving, classy, adventurous, salt-of-the-earth people, with a deep love of the great outdoors. They were the parents of six children: Kathryn (Kent Anderson) Della Piana; Julie (David) O’Leary; Carolyn (Shelley McMurdie) Macfarlane; Michelle (Jeff Hagen) Macfarlane; Mike Macfarlane; and Jeff Macfarlane. Grant and Ardis later divorced.

Ardis followed her dream of being a wife and mother, and she always put her children first. She didn’t marry again—by choice, not for lack of suitors. She was a talented designer and painter, and she was going to school to be an interior decorator when she divorced. After her divorce, she continued to raise her children—mostly on her own. Necessity meant getting a job, which she found at the University of Utah, first at Student Services and then at the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office. She worked at the university from 1976 to 1998, all while taking care of her elderly parents.

As a single mother, Ardis didn’t have much—in terms of time or money. She learned to change a tire, replace sprinkler heads, fix broken windows and leaky faucets, fill out her own income taxes (with the help of her father). She was the fixer, the painter, the do-it-yourself single mom. Ardis was also an excellent seamstress, staying up until the wee hours—sewing clever Halloween and Nativity costumes and beautiful clothing. She worked all day, and then well into the night at home.

Ardis loved deeply and freely. People who knew her sought her out for her kindness and wisdom, and she influenced countless lives for good. She was a great example of a strong, independent, capable, and faithful woman who was lovingly devoted to her kids. She taught them to be forgiving, open-hearted, kind, and loving, and to understand the value of working hard.

It wasn't until the kids were grown that Ardis could explore and pursue interests of her own. And she had a wonderful and supportive network of friends. She loved traveling, painting, dancing, dating, and fulfilling her church responsibilities. She always loved babies and children, working with them in her church callings—Primary was her favorite. She was also a good sport, packing up six kids and taking them on adventures, hauling them to Lake Powell, taking them camping, horseback riding, and on pack trips—doing it all!

Ardis was deeply loved by her family. To her grandchildren, she was a constant source of safety and love. They looked forward to sleepovers at her house, playing dress-up and board games, falling asleep to her lullabies, and eating warm pancakes with butter and sugar in the morning. As one grandchild said, "She has always been safety, warmth, sweetness, and humor—an earthly angel to me." Another grandchild said, "She always made me feel like the most important person in the room." These are the sentiments shared by all her grandchildren.

Ardis had an abiding testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and she shared that testimony with her children and grandchildren. She prayed for them daily.

Ardis is survived by her six children, 17 grandchildren, and 30 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings.

Visitation will be Friday, Aug. 22, at 10 a.m., with funeral services at 11 a.m., at Yale Ward (1431 Gilmer Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106) Interment will follow at Murray City Cemetery, 5490 S. Vine Street, Murray, Utah 84107.

We are forever indebted to the caring staff at Spring Gardens in Holladay, as well as to the nurses from Inspiration Home Health and Hospice.