

Aune "Anu" Pasanen Hirst

October 12, 1939 ~ January 28, 2021

Aune "Anu" Pasanen Hirst, our loving mother, Mummi (“grandma”), great grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend, died peacefully with her children by her side on January 28, 2021, in South Jordan, Utah, at age 81, after her third occurrence with breast cancer.

Anu was born on October 12, 1939, in Oulu, Finland, to Pauli and Anna Pasanen. Anu began singing at a young age in local theater productions and professionally performing in her late teens. She was the lead singer and bass guitar player in the Bell Boys, a well-known pop band based in Oulu, Finland. Her band toured across Finland, playing in night clubs and concert halls.

In November 1962 she became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints after meeting two Latter-day Saint missionaries while working the music counter of a department store. She was called to serve a mission for the Church in Finland for 18 months, and at the conclusion she was asked to serve again as a secretary to the next mission president. While serving, she toured Finland teaching the gospel through song. Following her mission, she returned to performing with the Bell Boys.

In 1967 she came to the United States for what was supposed to be a short visit. While in Salt Lake City, she worked at the translation department of the Church assisting with the translation of the Book of Mormon into Finnish. Her short stay became permanent after she was reacquainted with Jerry Hirst, who had also served a Church mission in Finland while Anu was serving. After a short courtship, they were married in April of 1968 at the Manti Utah Temple.

After the birth of their first child, Paul, they moved to Germany for Jerry’s military assignment. Their second child, Laila, was born while in Germany. At the end of their assignment, they returned to Utah where Anna and Tina were born. In 1978, they built a home in Sandy, Utah, where they lived for 25 years. During that time Aune worked with Jerry in their store, The Finnish Line (selling imports from Finland and other Scandinavian countries), as an overnight caregiver, and as a sales associate at Mervyn’s where she was loved by her customers.

Anu was an accomplished singer and enjoyed sharing her talents, especially singing in or conducting church choirs. She was also an active member of the Finnish expat community in the Salt Lake City area. Her love of her homeland Finland was passed on to her children. Later in life, she became a fan of the Utah Jazz basketball team and enjoyed not just watching their games but following the Jazz players’ off-court lives.

Anu gave up her professional singing career to raise her 4 children, serve in her church in various capacities, serve as a temple worker in the Jordan River Temple, and serve multiple missions for the Church in Finland. Following the death of her husband, she served her third mission in 2011-2012 for 18 months as a secretary to the mission president in the Helsinki Finland Mission. She also enjoyed her service in the Jordan River Temple.

Anu is survived by her children, Paul (Teresa), Laila De Ranieri, Anna Butler (Jeffrey) and Tina Bellon (Ken); 17 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild; siblings, Raili Jernvall, Eva Iskulehto and Pentti Pasanen, of Oulu, Finland. She is preceded in death by her parents, Pauli and Anna “Anni” Pasanen of Oulu, Finland and her husband, Jerry Hirst, of Sandy, Utah.

A viewing is scheduled for Friday, February 5 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at Larkin Mortuary Riverton, 3688 West 12600 South, Riverton, Utah. A funeral will be held on Saturday, February 6 at 11:00 am MDT, at the same location. Attendance at the services is limited due to Covid-19 restrictions. This service can be viewed via Zoom meeting by clicking on the blue box “Watch Zoom Service” to the right of her photo above. Please contact the family if you wish to attend in person.

A special thanks to the Intermountain Hospice team and the loving care given over the last seven weeks, especially from nurse Amber and home care worker Sharonde.