

Avonell Sorenson Rappleye

June 1, 1921 ~ November 2, 2021

Avonell Sorenson Rappleye passed away on Nov. 2, 2021, after a century of a life well-lived with a cheerful gratitude and a radiant joyful smile.

Avonell was born June 1, 1921, in Gunnison, Utah, the youngest child of Albert Lloyd and Agnes Christine Sorenson's seven children, including a set of twins who died in infancy. When she was 6 years old, her family moved to the mining town of Ruth, Nevada. It was her older sister Dortha who taught her to play the piano and Avonell also learned to play the organ. Avonell played both in many church and community events and also shared her love of music with many of her children and grandchildren.

She was valedictorian of her graduating class at White Pines High School in Ruth, Nevada.

Avonell continued her education at Brigham Young University, where she was active in a variety of organizations and played clarinet in the Cougar Marching Band. She graduated with a teaching degree and returned to Nevada where she taught elementary school. During one summer, she served a three-month mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to California, including San Francisco.

Avonell decided to continue her studies at BYU to pursue becoming a doctor when she met Foster Drew Rappleye, who had returned from serving in World War II. The two dated and were married in the Salt Lake Temple on April 11, 1947 — eloping two months ahead of their initial date in June.

They are the parents of eight children, seven who lived to adulthood. Foster and Avonell have made their home in Twin Falls, Idaho, and in Green River, Vernal and Orem, Utah.

A lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she served in a variety of ways, both in church callings, including Relief Society president, ward organist and as a temple organist in the Provo Utah Temple and later the Mount Timpanogos Temple, and quietly, kindly and cheerfully helped those around her as she saw a need.

She returned to BYU to work in continuing education and helped many students. She finished her master's degree in guidance and counseling in 1982 and was recognized with the Division of Continuing Education's Administrative Excellence Award in 1983. She was a gifted writer and won essay contests as a youth and had poetry published. An experience she wrote based on her childhood was published in the Friend magazine.

An avid BYU fan, she attended football and basketball games as long as her health permitted and still watched the games as often as possible.

After she and Foster both retired, they served a mission together in the Connecticut Hartford Mission from 1991-1992.

As her children married and began their families, Avonell and Foster became Grandma and Grandpa to 53 grandchildren and 174 — and counting — great-grandchildren. She kept a wall of photos of each of her grandchildren and kept up with birthdays, baptisms, graduations, weddings and other special occasions for many years. She was devoted to the gospel and loved the Lord. She was a blessing to those who knew her. In her final visits with her posterity, she advised them to always go to church and say their prayers at least twice a day.

Avonell is preceded in death by her parents, siblings, husband Foster, daughter Carrie Christine and two great-grandchildren, Lillian Schauers and Phoebe Nielson. She's survived by her children Lloyd (Kathy), John (Denice), Charles (Cathy), Betty Ann Curtis (Steve), Patricia Terry (Mike), Kathy Sue Barrett (Alan) and Jeanie Davis (Rick), 53 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 13, with a viewing from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Cedar Hills Utah Stake center, 3950 West Cedar Hills Drive, Cedar Hills, Utah 84062. A viewing will be 6-7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 12, at Larkin Mortuary in Riverton, 3688 W. 12600 South, Riverton Utah, 84065. Burial will be noon on Monday, Nov. 15, at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Camp Williams in Bluffdale.

If you are unable to attend in person, the services will be streamed via zoom. Please click the "Watch Services" tab at the top right. You will need to be signed into a zoom account to watch.