

Barbara Elizabeth Bean Nielson

February 11, 1922 ~ June 6, 2021

Barbara Elizabeth Bean Nielson died June 6th, 2021, in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was born February 11, 1922, at her grandparent's home in the Avenues. She was a much loved only child of her parents, William Ekins Bean and Marie Arbuckle Bean. She often recalled a wonderful childhood growing up in Salt Lake City in the 1920's and 1930's. Her grandmother took her to hundreds of vaudeville shows and movies at the Orpheum Theater and she vividly remembered seeing the first "talkie" at the Victory Theater. After a show, they would always go to the Tea Room at ZCMI for a slice of cherry pie.

On summer weekends she went with her parents to the family ranch near Rockport, Utah. In the years before the current reservoir covered the area with water, the ranch was a special place for her, filled with memories of family gatherings, her pony and adventures on the Weber River. Barbara attended Salt Lake City schools and entered the University of Utah in the fall of 1939. She was active in several groups and joined the Chi Omega Sorority. She graduated with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education in 1943.

It was while attending a U of U basketball game that her future husband, Reid Nielson, first saw her across the court. He turned to his friend Bob Olsen and declared, "I wish I knew that girl's name." Bob responded, "Her name is Barbara, she's my first cousin." They were soon dating and had a very long courtship due to Reid's service overseas during World War II.

After graduating in 1943, she supported the war effort as a civilian employee of the 9th Service Command which was stationed at Fort Douglas. She attained one of the top civilian positions in her office and was chosen by the military personnel at the Fort to be one of the "sweethearts" of Fort Douglas. Through her work she met officers from around the country and spent many evenings accompanying them to the Aviation Club, the Rainbow Randevu or other Officers' Clubs in the area.

However, she never stopped thinking about Reid throughout the war and hoped for his safe return. They finally married on July 9, 1947, and later became parents of two daughters. She was an avid reader and was knowledgeable about antiques and doll collecting. She and Reid were longtime season ticket holders to Ballet West, the Utah Symphony and Pioneer Theater Company. She was a member of several organizations and loved being an officer on the Central Committee of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. She was proud of her ancestors, including Francis Armstrong, an early mayor of Salt Lake City, and his wife Isabella who came to Utah as a handcart pioneer. She was a devoted wife and mother and supported Reid in his legal career. Reid passed away in 1996.

As per Barbara's wishes, a private celebration of her life has been held by her family. She is survived by her beloved daughters Patricia Smith and Ann Atwood, her son-in-law Dr. Homer R. Smith and her much loved

grandsons Colin, Evan and Peter Smith. The family wishes to thank Active Hospice for their dedication. For the online guestbook, visit larkinmortuary.com.