

Barbara Folsom Mecham

December 10, 1928 ~ January 3, 2025

On Friday, January 3, 2025, Barbara Folsom Mecham passed away at the age of 96. She was surrounded by many family members at her passing. Barbara was the daughter of Elry Leonard Folsom and Maurine Bennion Folsom. She was born in Sewell, Chile, on December 10, 1928, during a period when her father was working as a mining engineer for Braden Copper Company. Barbara spent her early years in the mining town, before going to boarding school at Santiago College for high school. After 15 years in Chile, Barbara and her family returned to their roots in Salt Lake City, Utah. She attended and graduated from East High School and moved on to the University of Utah, where she received a degree in Spanish secondary education. During this period, she met and started dating Leonidas Ralph Mecham. After sitting together on a piano bench at a church fireside, they became inseparable. When Ralph left to serve a church mission in Great Britain, Barbara and her friends started the H triple M club (how many more months!). Soon after Ralph's return, they were married for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake Temple on August 10, 1950, by then-Elder Spencer W. Kimball. Barbara and Ralph began married life in Salt Lake City, while Ralph completed his studies at the University of Utah, and Barbara taught junior high school Spanish. In 1952 they moved to the Washington, DC, area for Ralph's work, and Barbara began a decades-long love for the area and its people. They lived in East Riverdale, Greenbelt, Bethesda and, for the last 55 years, Potomac, Maryland. Because of physical challenges, Barbara moved to Holladay, Utah, two months prior to her passing, to be closer to family.

A lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Barbara had a strong testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and served faithfully in many callings and organizations including Relief Society, Young Women and the Primary. In her mid-80's she inspired many Primary children to learn the Articles of Faith with her promise to make them a giant cookie. She served as a temple worker in the Washington, DC Temple for almost 40 years and was blessed to attend the rededication of that Temple in 2022. She loved to study the scriptures and found numerous podcasts to support her gospel learning efforts. Her last calling was to invite the Potomac Ward members to give sacrament meeting prayers. She loved this calling and used it as an opportunity to get acquainted with ward members through lengthy telephone conversations—no texts for her!

Barbara loved to learn new things. Whether it was trying a new recipe or spending hours in her garden, she was never bored or afraid of challenges. She enjoyed reading and shared titles of new books she had read. Her interests led to joining numerous clubs and organizations where she thrived. She was a member of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Times Club, as well as a local gardening club. She always had a sewing or knitting project going. She loved to explore new places, near and far. She and Ralph shared many trips to places around the country and the world, but some of her happiest times were spent exploring rural Pennsylvania and Maryland with friends, looking for antiques and quilts. Her home reflected that interest and enhanced the life of her family. Barbara

and Ralph's home became a gathering place for family and friends. Barbara loved to entertain, and her home was always open to everyone. She was also committed to her community. For over 30 years Barbara delivered Meals on Wheels every Friday.

Barbara was preceded in death by the love of her life, Leonidas Ralph Mecham, with whom we believe she has now been reunited. She is survived by her five children—Mark Leonidas (Pat Tomlinson), Meredith (Brad Smith), Richard Owen (Janine Hansen), Stephen Folsom (Angela Welch), and Alison (Eric Bench); 17 grandchildren; and 38 great grandchildren, with another coming in June. She is also survived by her sister Jean Folsom Hinckley (Mike Hinckley). Her brother Robert Elry Folsom (Nancy Pearson) passed in 2002. Family is a huge part of Barbara's legacy. Each family member has special memories of spending time with her. She and Ralph traveled all over the country to attend graduations, baptisms, blessings, and many important events their family members were involved in. She and Ralph wanted their children and grandchildren to know one another, and many family reunions were organized to form bonds that will last for years to come.

Unlike many in her generation, Barbara embraced new technology. When Ralph asked what she wanted for Christmas a few years ago, she insisted she needed a new laptop computer. She was one of the first members of her ward to begin "zooming" into church meetings during the 2020 Covid pandemic. She used her cell phone to stay in touch with her many family members and friends and would answer the phone on her watch when the cell phone was out of reach. She learned the miracle of online banking, and many were the beneficiaries of her Venmo skills. She even put the Lyft app on her phone to help her get places when she gave up driving, not wanting to be a burden to friends—friends who never saw her as a burden! Many of us received frantic calls from Barbara about typed material that had somehow "disappeared" from her devices.

Leaving her home in Potomac last fall was difficult. Her friends there had become like family, but like everything she did, Barbara was determined to thrive in her new environment. She reconnected with so many family members and friends in Utah, including spending time with her sister, Jean, teaching each other new skills. She attended the Tabernacle Choir Christmas Concert in December and delighted in the music. She especially enjoyed the holidays with local family.

Thanks to the staff at The Ridge Cottonwood (Senior Living) for their friendship and care. Also, thanks to her caregivers from Adventist Home Assistance in Maryland, who were so kind and capable.

Funeral services are planned for Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 11 am at the Salt Lake Emigration Stake Center, 589 East 18th Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84103. There will be a visitation for family and friends at the same location on Friday, February 7, 2025, from 6:00-8:00 pm. Barbara will be buried at the Salt Lake City Cemetery next to her beloved Ralph. In lieu of flowers, please donate to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Services.