

Beverly Joyce Clark Johnson

May 29, 1931 ~ June 2, 2024

Beverly Joyce Clark Johnson passed away on July 2nd, 2024. Her four children were with her and had been at her side for days, loving and comforting her. Her husband of 71 years, Dr. Dale Gedge Johnson, preceded her in death three months earlier. After 93 years of constant inquiry, uncommon generosity, and selfless support for her family and community, Beverly departed from this mortal existence with the loveliness and grace she exhibited throughout her life.

Caring about people was Beverly's defining quality. She had a sixth sense for who might be in need or hurting, and she devoted her life to serving others. "Bev" didn't need to be asked to provide help; she'd simply show up - with food, offering presence and empathy, as well as doing whatever might be of assistance. She was known for her scrumptious custard, for meals delivered to neighborhood newcomers, and for welcoming almost anyone into her home. Beverly was a passionate collector of knowledge and information, and she loved sharing her collection whenever she could. Family and friends were often the recipients of clipped articles about a topic she thought might hold appeal - hobbies, art, travel, music, sports - whatever one happened to enjoy or appreciate in life. She rarely missed the details of a person's life; your interests were as important to her as her own.

Beverly was born in Evanston, Illinois, the first child of Ruby and Russell Clark. Her family moved to Southern California when she was in high school. In college at the University of Utah, she met Dale Johnson, fell in love, and though, as the daughter of a surgeon, she'd said she didn't want to marry a doctor due to long working hours, she changed her mind and accepted his proposal. She enjoyed her involvement with Chi Omega Sorority and retained lasting friendships from her undergraduate years in Utah, but she was also eager for new experiences in the Boston, MA area as Dale began his post-medical school surgical training. Ultimately, Bev and her family relocated from Massachusetts to Maryland to New Jersey to Pennsylvania and finally, after 15 years on the East Coast, returned to Salt Lake City. Beverly was the foundation and guiding support that launched and sustained the trajectory of her husband's remarkable career. That role was anything but easy and, at times, lacking in expressed appreciation as was common at that time. But she remained resolute and committed to her family and, in time, found her stride and place in the world.

Bev's children liked teasing her about occasional, idiosyncratic pronunciations; her taste tests, e.g., Heinz vs. Hunts; her love of the word game "Categories;" and, above all, emergency preparedness, e.g., what to do if caught in crocodile-infested waters. She loved Handel; Andrew Wyeth; Exponent Magazine; the color aqua; tailored clothing; Dots and Black Crows; scissors at the ready; note pads on which to scribble her thoughts continuously; and enormous mammals. She had a soft spot for the elderly (though didn't always love being one).

Music offered Beverly a place of engagement, accomplishment, and spiritual reward. It played a central role in her life. After learning to play the piano in her youth, she turned to the organ, studying under Alexander Schreiner, and was honored to serve as her church's organist and as an organist in the Salt Lake Temple well into her 80s. Immediately after moving back to Salt Lake City in 1971, she joined the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Early Sunday morning rehearsals became a favorite time of the week, where she relished singing for 12 years. Her musical participation was broad and, in 1984 and 1985, Beverly served as the Utah Symphony's Guild President, garnering accolades for her work there. She shared her deep love of music with her husband throughout both of their lives.

Beverly was an active, lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving in various capacities, including Relief Society President and Primary President. She cherished the people she met there and was grateful for the association and for the guiding anchor it afforded, regardless of where she made her home. For her, religious affiliation was a community and sanctuary as well as a place of worship.

Always mindful of the less fortunate, Beverly was, at her core, a quiet yet unwavering social worker who touched the lives of the sick, discouraged, recently divorced, laid off, and lonely, as well as those new to motherhood or marriage. She was a driving force in maintaining family relationships and encouraging kinship and friendship. She wanted to learn everything about a person's background, interests, and history. She worked tirelessly to preserve memories by saving and organizing correspondence, photographs, and journals. She championed the lives of loved ones especially, never once seeking the limelight herself. In the words of a beloved niece, "She was the most other-minded person I ever knew."

Beverly is survived by her siblings Barbara (Robert) Boies, Robert (Anne) Clark, and Stephen (Lindi) Clark; her children, Pam (Robert) Fillmore, Paul (Martha) Johnson, Charlotte (Shawn) Ferrin, and Peter (Mel) Johnson; 13 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren; and three great-great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dale G. Johnson, her parents, Russell Clark and Ruby Dorius (Clark) Lewis, and her brother, John (Antoinette) Clark.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 13th, at 12 noon at the LDS Hilltop Ward Chapel, 589 East 18th Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah. Friends may call at the Ward prior to services from 10:30-11:30 am. Interment will be at the Salt Lake Cemetery. We are grateful to family members, friends, and healthcare providers who supported and loved our mother to the end. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in memory of Beverly to the Utah Food Bank.