

Bonnie Jean Ward

April 10, 1931 ~ January 7, 2022

Bonnie Jean Gardner Ward, age 90, of Lehi, UT, passed away Friday, January 7, 2022, as her family kept watch at her bedside. Bonnie was born April 10, 1931, in Blackfoot, Idaho, to Roscoe Herman Gardner and Monta Clark. Monta had just one brother and never got the sister she wanted, so she was delighted when her baby girl arrived. Bonnie was the apple of her daddy's eye, and often confessed that he had probably spoiled her. She was the middle child with older brother, Clark Roscoe Gardner, and younger brother, Samuel Duane Gardner. She was blessed to grow up having close connections with her grandparents, and lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins.

When Bonnie was about eight years old it became progressively difficult for her to breath. She was eventually admitted to the hospital where she stopped breathing. Not being able to find the cause, the doctor pronounced her dead. Her grandmother was with her and asked the doctor if there was anything else he could do. He then removed two large stones from Bonnie's throat and she began breathing again. Bonnie remembered kissing the doctor on his bald head and telling him she loved him! She was very proud that her stones were so unusual they were sent to a museum in the east. Bonnie went on to attend Blackfoot High School where she was on the Baton Twirling Team. She worked and worked to learn to ride a horse and was named Rodeo Queen. She was also a candy-striper, which is now called a CNA, at the Blackfoot Hospital.

In another experience when she was young, Bonnie had a dream about a handsome, dark-haired boy. One day as she was looking through a magazine, she saw a picture that looked like the boy in her dream. She cut it out and put it in her wallet. When Bonnie was in high school, she and her friend were walking down a street in Blackfoot one afternoon, two boys from Pocatello pulled up in their car and asked if the girls would like to go for a ride. They did! Bonnie later found the old picture in her wallet and realized she had truly met the man of her dreams, Thayne Leon Ward, the driver of the car.

A few years later, Bonnie married Thayne, on March 23, 1951, in the Idaho Falls, Idaho LDS Temple. Although Bonnie became very ill during her pregnancies, she sacrificed her own comfort to give birth to four children: daughters, Miki Rae and Janae, son, Tracy Thayne, and daughter, Yvette.

Bonnie was never content with average. She worked, and sacrificed, and pushed to help her children, and any others who came within her reach, to achieve her hopes and dreams for them. Those dreams often included singing, dancing, and stage performance. When her children were young, she taught children's vocal groups (The Tiny Tuners) who performed on stage and TV throughout south-eastern Idaho. She taught choir at Blackfoot High School where her students performed an end of year musical theater production. She performed with a barbershop quartet. She also produced plays and performances for her LDS Ward and Stake.During these years she continued her own education, enrolling in classes at Idaho State University.

After moving to the San Fernando Valley in Southern California in January of 1968, Bonnie's enthusiasm and drive lead to her children participating in numerous professional musical performances including the Glendale Center Theater and the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. For her fervor, she received an award for the California Entertainment Mother of the Year.

In addition to this, Bonnie taught elementary school and music classes at several private schools. After she completed her Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree at California State University Northridge, she and Thayne purchased the estate of comedian Stan Laurel in Canoga Park, California, and opened a private school they named "Award Academy". Bonnie was school director and Thayne was property manager. They eventually sold that school and purchased another in San Bernardino. And after that another in Sandy, UT. Bonnie was well loved by her students and their parents. And she never lost an opportunity to include a musical performance in every school event, including graduation!

Running a school was challenging, so Bonnie and Thayne purchased a motorhome they could escape in on the weekends. They loved their little motorhome so much, they decided to purchase a larger one, and then a larger one. They loved exploring and relaxing in their traveling home. Sometimes they surprised their children by just showing up for a visit. And sometimes they took their kids on adventures with them.

Bonnie and Thayne eventually sold their Sandy school and bought a New York Burrito fast-food franchise. It was at this time that Thayne was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Bonnie did her best, enlisting her daughter's help, to hold this business together. But eventually it became too much for her.

At the time of Thayne's passing, Bonnie was sending out invitations for her upcoming Blackfoot High School reunion. One of the invitations went to her old high school boyfriend, Shirley S. Davis. She told him that Thayne had just passed away. He wrote back immediately and told her that his wife had died the month before, and he was coming from Alaska on some business to Salt Lake, and would like to see her.

Bonnie and Shirl were married July 3, 1999, in Sandy, Utah. Shirl liked motorhomes as much as Bonnie and they spent their time traveling from Utah, to Alaska, to Arizona, and anywhere else they liked. The question was often asked, "Do you know where Mom is?" In the midst of their travels, they bought a home in Hurricane, Utah, which served as base camp for their adventuring.

After Shirl's passing in May of 2016, Bonnie lived in Orem, Pleasant Grove, Draper, and Lehi, Utah, moving seven times in six years!

Bonnie lived a life of service not only to her family and her profession, but also to her church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She served in numerous callings including Stake Music Chairman, Relief Society President, Choir Director, and Organist.

Bonnie will be remembered for her love of family, her love of music, her love of people, her drive, her courage, and her devotion to her covenants. No matter what trials she faced, no matter what pushed her down, she always found a way to rise up and soar again.

Bonnie was preceded in death by her husband, Thayne Leon Ward, her second husband, Shirley S. Davis, and her older brother Clark R. (Wendy) Gardner. She is survived by her children: Miki Rae (Clint M. Hunter), Janae (Thomas H. Pettit, Jr.), Tracy (Kristin Boyenger), and Yvette (Mark A. May), her brother Samuel D. (Konnie) Gardner, 21 grandchildren, 60 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral Services will celebrate Bonnie's life at 4:00pm on Thursday, January 13, 2022, at the Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. Dimple Dell Road, in Sandy, Utah.

Graveside service will be held at 11:00am on Saturday, January 15, 2022, at the Grove City Cemetery, 1 Willow Drive, in Blackfoot, Idaho.

To watch completed services please click "Watch Services" or following the following zoom link:https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/vxuEXpinAT7tEgaWQ9Pi9Nl9BWF0-wIUNuh-iJkyq_IJl23y-An_CC0A4ZeMxl-y.C9