

Carolyn Olsen Welling

March 13, 1925 ~ May 3, 2021

“For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.” – Doctrine and Covenants 25:12

“Music is my life.” – Carolyn Welling

Carolyn Olsen Welling quietly found her way home on May 3, 2021, in her own home, on her own terms and surrounded by all five of her children. It was a fitting send-off.

Carolyn was born March 13, 1925 in Ogden, Utah, the youngest child of Joseph Elden and Carrie Browning Olsen. (Her parents, and brothers Joseph Elden, Jr. and John Browning Olsen, preceded her in death.) At about age 3, Carolyn moved with her family to Southern California, where she spent her childhood and teen years. In her eighth year, the family traveled to Mesa Arizona where, on December 29, 1932, they were sealed in the Mesa Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – and so set Carolyn on a lifetime path of service to others.

Following high school graduation from Pasadena Junior College in 1943, Carolyn enrolled in the 1944 freshman class at Brigham Young University, and roomed on the second floor of Allen Hall – directly over the men’s housing on the first floor in which a lanky, basketball-playing accounting major by the name of H. Neil Welling was beginning his final undergraduate year. The two dated for the ensuing two years, while Neil finished his undergraduate degree and was accepted at the University of Oregon School of Dentistry. They married in the Salt Lake Temple on October 30, 1946. Neil then immediately journeyed back to Portland alone, while Carolyn returned to BYU to finish performances of La Boheme in which she sang the principal role of Mimi. After final curtain, she joined Neil in Oregon to begin life and family together.

Upon Neil’s completion of dental school in 1948, the couple (now joined by their oldest daughter Claudia) relocated to Salt Lake City to open a private dental practice. Two more children, Kristen and Anne Claire, joined the family before the Korean conflict took them to Fort Smith Arkansas, where Neil served as a military dentist for two years. Carolyn then returned with husband and three children to Salt Lake City. Within a few years, and with the arrivals of Janice and Jenny, the family group was complete.

Love of music – and especially of song – was the recurrent theme in all the variations of Carolyn’s busy life. She discovered a lyric soprano voice in her early teens, and pursued study both at BYU (pursuing her degree through the Extension Service while in Arkansas) and afterward through much of her life. She performed in opera and enjoyed long association with the Utah Opera Workshop (precursor to the Utah Opera Company), gave recitals, and even graced the concert stage, including solo performances of such works as Mozart’s Requiem Mass with the Utah Symphony under direction of Maestro Maurice Abravanel. Beginning in 1982, and for four years thereafter, she realized her hope of singing soprano with the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square. She taught both piano and

voice, and instilled a love of music in her daughters that has blessed many lives. And for over sixty years, Carolyn belonged to a cadre of vocal and string musicians bearing the unlikely name of Squeak and Squawk, presenting countless performances and forging enduring friendships.

But at the heart of all lay Carolyn's profound commitment to her faith. She saw her music as the voice through which testimony could be shared with family and community. She fulfilled many callings within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (including, at the time of her passing, Relief Society instructor). But her first love was Primary. She spent 16 years as Primary Music Director in her home ward and, for four years in the late 1970s, served on the music committee of the Church's Primary General Board. In these years, she contributed to revisions of the Primary Songbook, and was twice privileged to conduct Primary choirs in General Conference.

With Neil's retirement in the late 1980s, he and Carolyn served two couples missions – to England Leeds from 1989 to 1991, and to Scotland Edinburgh from 1996 to 1997. Neil's passing in 2009 left a void in her life that she filled with music, Gospel learning, and progeny – lots of them. Children, grandchildren and great grandchildren all boast collections of custom birthday cards created by "Grandma Great." She now leaves us for a time to rejoin her parents, siblings and beloved Neil – whose patience was likely wearing thin.

Carolyn is survived by Claudia Bailey (Carl), Kristen Beckstead (Rob), Anne Deaver (Tom), Janice Rampton (Vince), and Jenny Hunter, together with 29 grandchildren and 67 great grandchildren.

The family wishes to thank the many friends and well-wishers whose kindness blessed Carolyn's closing weeks and months. Special thanks are extended to her primary care givers, Dr. Jonathan Whisenant, Mary Green and Pamela Sunshine, and to Elevation Hospice for end-of-life care – most particularly given by Darian Hall, who has been adopted as an honorary Welling.

Funeral services for family will be held at the Colonial Hills Ward, 1455 South 1700 East, Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, May 8, 2021 at noon. Attendees are asked to respect COVID restrictions, including masks and social distancing. Friends and family are invited to call from 10:30 to 11:45. In lieu of flowers, please contribute to the Humanitarian Fund of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or the BYU-Pathway Worldwide Education Fund.

Those unable to attend in person may view service recording at
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/51ZJIjwZ4Hr8bSfbxu1LBu_t-FlwcbSGpQQxpxmtJtNOKtrjAiQZI0XYqjHGHt_U.rebSYfz

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