

Connie Renee Shipp Christensen

May 7, 1936 ~ November 4, 2022

Our wise and witty mother, Connie Renee Shipp Christensen, passed away peacefully on November 4, 2022, at age 86, surrounded by her family. Known by her grandchildren and many who loved her as “Nonnie,” her passing leaves an enormous hole in our lives. But precious qualities of her character remain with us as beacons. Connie was intellectually curious, generous with time, forgiveness and solicitude, and resolute in responding to challenges and setbacks gracefully, with tenacity, courage and hope. Throughout her long and interesting life, she distinguished herself as an educator, friend, mother, and grandmother.

Connie was born in Elsinore, Utah on May 7, 1936, the daughter of Clifford Austin Shipp and Lillie Anderton Hunt Shipp. She spent her childhood in Joseph, Utah and her high school days in Richfield. She believed there was no place more nurturing to a child than under the hot-blue skies, the shimmering silver maples, and the positive influence of caring ward members in a small Southern Utah town. One of her happiest childhood memories was hearing that World War II had finally ended, because it meant that her three elder brothers would soon be coming home—one as a highly decorated pilot—to their two little sisters and their recently widowed mother.

Connie earned her B.A. degree from the University of Utah and then taught English in Sacramento and at Olympus High School. During summers, she worked as a hostess at the Bureau of Information on Temple Square and at the Beehive House where, in 1961, she took the first official tours through the newly restored home of Brigham Young.

She married Jan Royden Christensen on April 4, 1963, in the Manti Temple. They were subsequently divorced in 1994 but remained close partners in grandparenting until Jan’s death in 2008.

Following an extended hiatus spent raising her three children through early childhood, Mom took a job teaching English literature at Brighton High School where she spent the next 30 years, including more than 20 of the most fulfilling years of her life teaching Advanced Placement English. She earned an M.A. in Educational Psychology at the University of Utah in 1989. Connie loved her students, and they often achieved some of the highest AP English exam pass rates in the country.

In her retirement, Mom read to her grandchildren, sketched with them, and attended their events whenever she could. As they grew, she delighted in hearing their thoughts and the details of their lives. Mom was a great conversationalist who always had something interesting to say, and her passion for the humanities was infectious. Her philosophy was that we should never allow our happiness to depend on factors beyond our control. She leaves behind a legacy of integrity, resilience, and self-sacrifice.

Mom was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She is survived by her three children: Melinda C. Robinson (Jon), West Linn, Oregon; Matthew J. Christensen (Keishi), Seoul, Korea; and

Angela C. Parkin (Brett), Salt Lake City, Utah; plus nine remarkable grandchildren and their families: Annie Robinson Driggs (Abraham); Jane Robinson; Nicholas Robinson; James (Anna) Parkin and their son, James; Andrew (Elizabeth) Parkin; Eliza Parkin Wardrop (Carter); Matthew Parkin; Anders Christensen and Emily Christensen. She was preceded in death by her parents; her former husband, Jan Royden Christensen; her sister, Sandy S. Fisher; and brothers Fred, Mack and Gayle Hunt.

Friends and family are invited to join us for the viewing at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, November 18, 2022, and for the funeral immediately following at noon in the Parley’s First Ward at 2350 So. 2100 East, Salt Lake City, Utah. Interment is at Larkin Sunset Lawn. For those unable to attend, services will be streamed via Zoom. Please click on the "Watch Services" link above. A free Zoom account is required to view.