

Denadene Clarke Merrell

February 25, 1939 ~ May 26, 2023

Dee Merrell, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, wife, sister, and friend died at the age of 84 on May 26th. She was surrounded by her children.

Denadene Clarke Merrell was born on February 25th, 1939 in Phoenix, Arizona to Elaine Mack and Denslow Robert Clarke. She grew up in Phoenix and was soon joined by her brothers, Floyd and Larry, and her sisters, Robyn and Colleen. Dee was a shy child and feared dogs and horses. Which lead to an adventure or two. She wrote once, comparing her apprehensions of life to that of walking along the edge of a lake, wondering if she had the strength and skill to jump in and survive to reach the other shore. Anyone who knew Dee also knows her life was met with a long series of treacherous leaps into the unknown. But she made them anyway. Dee gained a deep love of travel early in life when she went to Manhattan to meet her uncle, Reed, who was returning home from his mission to Belgium. During that trip, she got to see Winston Churchill standing aboard the same ship with her uncle. And she stood atop the Empire State Building for the first time. She married Melvin Joseph Merrell on June 3rd, 1969, and they made many trips together. In early days, much of the travel was camping in a tent: not her favorite. Later, travel life became more leisurely with the addition of a camper trailer. And after that, there were hotels and apartments and friends' houses. Dee traveled across the United States (including several visits to Disney properties, which she loved), to Canada, to Mexico, to Europe, to Samoa, and to China. She lived in Canada serving as a missionary, and then later as a 'civilian' with her friend, Sharon. Many years after that, she lived in China with her husband. All of these moves were leaps into the abyss for Dee. Her marriage to Mel was another big jump which made her not only a wife, but instantly a mother to three young girls: Karla, Julia, and Elise, whose natal mother had succumbed to a battle with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. And the household grew from there.

Exactly 9 months to the day after their wedding, Dee and Mel welcomed their daughter, Melodee, to the party. The years after that brought Jason, JoDee, Deni, Rachel, and Liesl. And we all lived and traveled together from our house on Luna Way in Cottonwood Heights, Utah.

Dee was constantly learning. If you should cross her path out and about, chances are she was accompanied by one or more of her children, and by the book she was reading.

Faith and imagination also played a big role in her life. She knew she was a child of God and did her best to instill this understanding in her own children. She had visions. She danced on picnic tables. She connected to people. She was a master gift giver. She washed endless piles of laundry: which she hated. She had endless piles of sewing projects: which she loved. She danced in a square dance group. She bowled in a league. She loved Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.

She loved her family.

Mom took her last leap from this life at 5:45 PM on May 26th. She was surrounded by her children, who held her hand and encouraged her. She is preceded in death by her husband, Melvin, her brother, Larry, and her sister, Robyn. Those of us who stayed behind include her brother, Floyd, her sister, Colleen, her nine children, her 26 grandchildren, and her 17 great grandchildren. Among many other dear ones who will miss her.

Someday, Mom, we'll see you on the other shore.

A viewing for friends and family will be held at Larkin Mortuary - Riverton, 3688 West 12600 South, Riverton UT, on Friday, June 2nd, from 6:00-8:00 PM.

A funeral service in her honor will be held at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Parkway 5th Ward, 10206 South 3200 West, South Jordan, UT on Saturday, June 3rd at 11:00 AM. A short viewing will precede beginning at 10:00 AM.

To watch the previously held funeral services, please click the "Watch Services" link above.