

Diane (Sue) Gillison West

May 19, 1934 ~ October 7, 2025

Diane (Sue) Gillison West passed away on October 7, 2025—just 11 days after her beloved husband of 73 years, **Hugh Sloan West Sr.** She often said she didn't want to live a day without him, and she came remarkably close.

Born in Lovell, Wyoming, Sue was the third of four children of Forrest and Elsa Herget Gillison. When she was six, the family moved to Portland, Oregon. As a teenager, Sue danced ballet, performed in Vaudeville, and worked at the Hollywood Theater. She met Hugh, ten years her senior, at a church activity, and they dated the summer between her junior and senior years of high school. When Hugh moved to Palo Alto, California, they maintained a long-distance courtship, while Sue was a cheerleader and dated the captain of the basketball team.

A month after graduating high school—and after mailing in her acceptance to BYU, where she had earned an art scholarship—Hugh called to propose. They were married six weeks later, on September 12, 1952, and settled in Palo Alto, where they immediately began their family. Over the course of their lives in Palo Alto, then Bloomfield, Connecticut, and finally Salt Lake City, Utah, they had seven children, of whom they were exceedingly proud.

Although she never completed college—twice returning, only to discover she was expecting another child—she was a lifelong learner. She loved to read, had a keen mind, and possessed an extraordinary memory, able to recall numerous poems, historical facts, and what everyone wore on every significant occasion throughout her life.

Mom created a home that was a joy to return to. She loved hearing about our days and staying closely connected to our lives. She was intimately aware of the details—especially when it came to our dates! She may not have worried much about grades, but she instilled in her children the belief that we could (and should) do anything good: *"Don't lead small lives,"* was a common refrain.

A consummate and classy hostess, she always knew what was fashionable in food and décor, ensuring the silver was polished and guests were warmly welcomed and finely fed. Despite never living near extended family, Mom made the holidays wonderful—she made the best turkey gravy for Dad's mashed potatoes.

Mom wasn't philosophical, but she had good instincts for what was of true worth. She was too fun to preach, yet she knew and trusted in the power of faith, and faith was quietly operative in her life. She served wherever she was called—including as a mission leader in the Ohio Columbus Mission, a temple worker, and in 70 years of ward and stake callings. She also volunteered for years as a garden guide on Temple Square.

During her time as a mission leader, Mom delighted in teaching missionaries table manners (often cautioning against the "Salt Lake slurp") and could name each missionary and their hometown from memory. She had a remarkable social gift and loved learning about—and talking about—people, "God's greatest creation."

So many of our memories are rooted in Mom's deep appreciation for life's simple pleasures: singing as a family—whether hymns on Sundays in Newport Beach or during long drives to and from church in Connecticut;

gardening, for which she had a natural talent; reading novels, biographies, and letters (or restaurant menus in anticipation of upcoming meals); caring for cats; basking in the sun; and taking afternoon naps.

Mom was an endless source of interesting conversation and witty one-liners, never letting the facts interfere with a good story—she loved to get a good reaction. Though she could be blunt at times, none of us ever doubted how deeply we were loved. Her morning prayers were famously long, as she made it a point to pray for each and every member of her large family. She loved Dad so dearly, rarely complaining about his busy work and church schedule, and often referring to him as “the most wonderful man in the world.”

She leaves a legacy of happy guests, beautiful gardens, an exemplary marriage, life-long resilience, and a big family that gets along and genuinely enjoys each other’s company. How grateful we are for our incomparable mother.

Sue is survived by her children: Ruth Lowe (Steve), Hugh (Julia), Katie Strike (Tony), Emmy Burton (Richard), Will (Lisa), John (Jan), and Anna Pearce (James); 34 grandchildren; 53 great-grandchildren; and her sister, Melly Holmstead. She was preceded in death by her husband, Hugh Sloan West Sr.; her grandson, William Ballantyne West Jr.; her sister, Joan Sinclair; and her brother, William (Bud) Gillison.

The family extends heartfelt thanks to Elenoa, Sara, Lusia, Tati, and others for their loving care of Mom and Dad during the past year and a half, and to the wonderful team at Spring Gardens, who so kindly supported all of us during their final weeks.

Those wishing to view the service via Zoom can click "Watch Service" or follow the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sk8AS5YB2Nhe63PzMrNkRDkMUvm9TdfIR5ZF01rn56lfR9-jhN__OfyA1ceBNjVh.-p2C