

Donna Deem Beesley

December 2, 1927 ~ October 22, 2022

Donna Deem Beesley, our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully in St. George, Utah October 22, 2022, of natural causes, surrounded by many of her children and grandchildren.

Donna was born December 2, 1927 on her family's farm in Harper Ward, just north of Brigham City, Utah, to LuRoy Peter Deem and Ida Pauline Olsen Deem. With four sisters and one brother, she grew up doing the hard work of a farm girl. She graduated from Box Elder High School and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Brigham Young University, majoring in Secretarial Practice, with a minor in English.

When working in Salt Lake City, Donna met Kenneth Horace Beesley on a blind date, and they were married December 1, 1950 in the Salt Lake Temple. They remained faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and would eventually have five children.

After Ken completed his Bachelor's degree, they moved to New York City, where, until children came along, Donna worked as a secretary for companies in Manhattan, including one with offices in the Empire State Building. She served as Primary President and supported Ken in his work as a counselor in the bishopric and in completing his graduate studies at Columbia University, where he later worked.

In 1958 the family moved to the New York suburbs, and in 1967 to Fresno, California, where she held various church callings, including Primary
Chorister and Brownie Leader, and supported Ken in his work at Fresno State College and in his role as a bishop.

In 1971, the family moved to Salt Lake City, where Donna served as a Primary teacher, a Relief Society pianist, and for two years as Relief Society
president, while Ken worked in the Church Education System, culminating his career as president of the LDS Business College (now Ensign Academy).

Donna did extensive research on the Enos Wall family and the historic Wall Mansion, in Salt Lake City, where the college was then located; and she wrote a paper that was later used as a guide in the mansion's restoration. She also did volunteer work for the Utah Heritage Foundation Speakers Bureau, notably doing research on the mansions of South Temple and on Utah ghost towns, and presenting lectures to school and adult groups.

After Ken's retirement in 1991, they started their next great adventure when they were called to be the very first LDS missionaries to Mongolia. They learned to say, "We've been called on a mission to Outer Mongolia, and that's not a joke." Donna's daytime assignment there was to teach English in what had been the Russian School, where she was adored by her pupils. Evenings and weekends they taught investigators and conducted church services. Today, 30 years after Donna and Ken first arrived in Mongolia, and started from scratch, there are now 2 stakes, a mission, 12 wards, 12 branches, and over 12,000 members.

On their return, Donna and Ken served for several years as ordinance workers in the Bountiful Temple and did volunteer work at Red Butte Gardens. They were active in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Donna was, above all, dedicated to her family, and she considered her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to be "the true blessings and riches of life." She was a loyal, loving, and constant wife, supporting Ken throughout his life, and courageously and selflessly nursing him as he declined these past few years.

She wrote, "While I have not known fame or fortune, I feel that I have been blessed more than I ever thought I merited." To all who knew her, this humble, hard-working, loving, and altogether magnificent woman merited all that she got and so much more. She will live forever in the loving memory of her family.

Donna is survived by four children, Kenneth Reid (Sharree) Beesley, Rulon Deem (Sharon) Beesley, Tamara (Clay) Thornton, and Ellen Christine (Gill) Halford; 16 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Kenneth Horace Beesley, who passed away March 27, 2022, and by daughter Diane (Thomas) Creighton, who passed away in 2017.

Viewings will be held Friday November 4, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and Saturday November 5 from 9:30 to 10:30 AM at the LDS "White Chapel," 3350 South 100 East, Bountiful, Utah. The funeral services will be held November 5, 11:00 to 12:00, also at the White Chapel.

To view the recorded services, please click on the "Watch Services" button at the top of Donna's obituary.