

Edna Fae Firmage Richards

March 16, 1921 ~ December 27, 2021

Edna Fae Firmage Richards passed away peacefully on December 27, 2021 in the home she and her husband built 69 years ago. Affectionately known as Suzie to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Edna Fae was born on March 16, 1921 in American Fork, Utah, the youngest child of John L. and Edna Chipman Firmage. She spent her early years living in American Fork and wintering in Long Beach and Beverly Hills in Southern California. Her family eventually settled in Salt Lake City where she attended Rowland Hall and the University of Utah. In college, she was a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority and the Trotters Club, winning ribbons on her horse, Prince Albert. Her favorite classes were speech, drama, English, archery, and geology.

During her senior year of high school, Edna Fae began dating George LaMont Richards, at the request of her parents. They were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on September 9, 1941. They shared every responsibility, challenge, and triumph together in their 70 years of marriage. She and LaMont loved entertaining in their home, and she was the ultimate hostess. She decorated and prepared with great attention to detail, always creating a memorable experience for her guests. Gracious and fun, she was a wonderful conversationalist, and everyone wanted to be in her company.

As a child in California, Edna Fae took performing arts classes and even put on a one-girl show, singing, dancing, and reciting poetry at various schools in her community. She continued performing throughout her life, including as the lead in Anne of Green Gables at Rowland Hall, a part that fit her personality and her strawberry blonde hair. Her most treasured role, however, was playing Elfie Claus for her grandchildren at Christmas time.

Edna Fae loved music, dance, theatre, fine art, and good literature. She even recited poetry by her favorite poet, Sara Teasdale, at her 90th birthday party. She was sentimental and romantic, had a great appreciation for beauty, both natural and manmade, and always tried to surround herself with beautiful things. She loved parties, dancing, and dressing up, and was known for her great taste and fashion sense. She disliked anything boring!

Throughout her life, her loyal, funny, and charming nature won her many friends, and she had a full social life filled with dinner groups and social clubs. She always enjoyed a good visit with family and friends. She had a quest for knowledge and self-improvement, and she liked spending time reading books and taking classes. She read two newspapers every day and had fun doing the word scrambles and puzzles. Despite significant health challenges, she loved to travel and explore new places, and together with LaMont, she traveled to over 40 countries.

She had a great appreciation for her heritage and the sacrifices and achievements of her parents and grandparents. Because she had benefitted from the hard work of her parents, she gave generously of her means to her family and to several organizations, charities, and the arts, as well as many individuals she did not know, but whose needs were made known to her.

In addition, she contributed her leadership skills, collaborative nature, and creative abilities to the PTA, Junior League, Young Audiences, and the Pi Beta Phi Alumni Board. She also chaired or participated in fundraising events for charitable organizations. She particularly enjoyed her volunteer position as a hostess and tour guide at the Joseph Smith Building and the Church Office Building. She served faithfully in several church callings, her favorite of which was Relief Society Cultural Refinement teacher.

She was diplomatic yet direct, determined and courageous, with a wonderful sense of humor that could be surprisingly irreverent. As a mother, she created great fun for her children while also teaching them how to be well behaved. Though petite in size, she was feisty and resilient, and she was much stronger physically, mentally, and spiritually than she realized.

During her 100 years of life, she knew health, illness, love, loss, fear, and faith, and she faced them all with an honest, open nature, secure in the knowledge that she was loved and cherished by her husband and family.

She is survived by her four children, G. LaMont Richards (DeAnne), Charlotte Harrison (David), J. Lawrence Richards (Julie), and Shauna Hill (David); 12 grandchildren; and 25 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband.

The family held a private service on Thursday, December 30, 2021. Edna Fae was laid to rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Salt Lake City. The family expresses its appreciation to the compassionate caregivers of Danville Home Support Services.