

Elayne Clark

March 11, 1928 ~ September 15, 2025

Elayne Bright Clark passed on at the age of 97 in the late evening of September 15, 2025. She was surrounded by family.

Elayne was born March 11,1928, on the family farm west of Rigby, Idaho, the second daughter of Clifford M. and Ruth Harper Bright. In time, she had three sisters: Edythe, Janet, and Clifta. They were a close quartet throughout their lives. They loved growing up on this farm. It remained a gathering place for all of them, including the aunts and uncles and cousins who lived nearby. The girls tended animals, drove tractors to help their father, gathered peas and new potatoes and asparagus from the ditchbanks in the spring, and rode horses. As each came of age, Elayne and Janet rode in Rigby as rodeo queens.

Elayne was known for her clear, lyrical soprano voice. She started performing at a very young age, age 3, with her older sister Edythe. At 10, she began singing lessons in Salt Lake City with the famous soprano Emma Lucy Gates Bowen, and then lived in Salt Lake periodically to continue those lessons. She lived first with her Grandmother Harper and later with Emma Lucy herself, attending elementary school and then East High School in the city. And Elayne remembered fondly her excursions to lakes and trails around Brighton in Big Cottonwood Canyon that delighted her each time she accompanied the Bowens to their cabin there.

Elayne moved to Provo at age 18 to attend Brigham Young University. Very soon she was performing at student events. That's where she caught the eye and ear of Dallan Clark, a trombone player in Wes Berry's dance band. She soon became that band's singer, and a little later she married Dallan in the Idaho Falls Temple in 1947. In 1950, their six children began to be born: Greg, Kristi, Cliffy, Chuck, Kelly, and Katy. All but Cliffy, who died as a toddler, were present by her side on her final day. We believe he was there too.

The Clark family lived in Provo until Dallan died in 1988. After Elayne finished her work as a travel agent and retired, she moved to Idaho to help her sister care for their aging mother, Ruth. After her mother died she moved to Salt Lake to the little house on Second Avenue where she lived for the next thirty years.

Wherever she found herself, Elayne shared her singing freely in hundreds of funerals, ladies’ club meetings, church services, and civic events for over forty years, and she kept the thank-you notes she received from each one of them. For over a decade she starred in many of the musicals and operas that were produced by the Utah Valley Opera in Provo, and she drove to Salt Lake twice a week for several years as a member of the Tabernacle Choir. In her 80's she volunteered for several years in the Church music department.

Elayne was a fixture at the front of each church congregation of which she was a member, conducted their singing, and leading their ward choirs. For many years she joined BYU folklorist Tom Cheney in presenting around the valley a trove of Mormon pioneer folk songs he had unearthed and she had learned to perform. Later, in Salt Lake,

she honored her pioneer heritage by serving in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and recording Mormon folk songs.

Elayne was always practical and creatively frugal. Her children remember her foraging for edible mushrooms, chokecherries, and elderberries in their foothill neighborhood, making soap using Depression-era recipes, and showing them how to make the miniature marzipan fruits and vegetables look amazingly real each Christmas. Mostly, though, we remember her kindness and compassion for others as well as her open mind and open heart. These are virtues we try to emulate.

Elayne is survived by her children: Greg Clark (Linda), Kristi Staker (Allan), Chuck Clark (Elaine), Kelly Parkinson (Brett), and Katy Taylor (Tom), as well as her sister, Clifta Tobler (Boyd). Sharing their sorrow at her passing and cherishing with them her memory are 19 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, December 27, at 10:15 am at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 185 P Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, preceded by a visitation at 9:00 am. Interment will be at 3:00 pm at East Lawn Memorial Hills, 4800 N 650 E, Provo, Utah.