

Ellie Dean Warren Pendleton

August 29, 1930 ~ January 8, 2021

If you noticed that the world felt a little less bright on Friday, January 08, 2021, it was because Ellie Dean Warren Pendleton (90) of Salt Lake City (SLC) — a compassionate soul with many talents and a phenomenal wit, embarked on her next adventure, rejoining her eternal companion, M. Keith Pendleton. Those who knew her called her by first name, of course, but also, she was Daughter, Granddaughter, Sister, Cousin, Wife, Mom, Aunt, Ellie Oma/Grandma, Great-grandma, Sister Pendleton, Mrs. Pendleton, and Teacher. When one of the aforementioned conditions didn't fit — although she never allowed a silly thing like genetics from holding you back from using a familial term — you surely called her Friend.

Ellie was born on August 29, 1930, in SLC to Charles Albert Warren and Effie Dean Woolley Warren. She had an enterprising single mom, one who moved the family multiple times in search of the best opportunities. This semi-nomadic experience influenced Ellie's resiliency, ingenuity, and appreciation for diversity. As a five-year-old, she began cooking for her older brothers and performing household chores, so her mother could focus on working and providing necessities for their family unit. Ellie reported that her mother, who was a hair stylist, or beautician as the profession was known then, would experiment on her with the latest colors, bleaching, permanents ("perms"), and styles — some of which had less-than-ideal outcomes.

Because her mother recognized Ellie's natural beauty, she enrolled a young Ellie in an open casting for a movie production company that was looking for a child actress similar to Shirley Temple. Ellie made it to the finals, but her father would not sign the contract. Ellie later recounted that although her father was absent and didn't seem to have the family's best interest in mind, he actually did her an incredible service because she recognized that a life as a child star might have been a challenging one.

She attended West High School in SLC. In 1946, her mother moved her Alameda, CA. In 1947, at the age of 16, Ellie graduated from Alameda High School, where she had participated in the Junior Red Cross Council and Glee Club.

Ellie returned to SLC and attended the University of Utah School of Fine Arts, while working at the Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) department store as a sales clerk and model. Keith, whom Ellie initially viewed as a smooth-talking ladies' man because he dressed well and was a drummer in a band, would visit her at work or at the bus stop, trying to convince her to date him. After some persuasion on the part of her enamored suitor, she agreed to go on a date with him. After experiencing a deep connection and learning about shared religious beliefs, she married the determined Keith on April 30, 1951, in the Salt Lake Temple. She didn't find out his true age —11 years her senior — until after they were married and Keith applied for a new driver's license.

Later, she would jest that he robbed the cradle.

Because they could have not been more different from each other, Keith and Ellie proved that opposites do attract. Ellie was a spontaneous, unconventional individual, who didn't care what people thought of her. She challenged Keith's systematic, traditional ways by introducing him to new people, experiences, and foods. As she used to say, "She was Feta, and he was Cheddah." Keith and Ellie enjoyed a remarkable 57-year marriage, which afforded them four beautiful children. Ellie liked to have fun and was a bit mischievous. The kids shared a story in which Keith forgot the vacation money for a road trip. Ellie noticed the forgotten funds before they left and grabbed the money, but she didn't tell Keith. She allowed him to worry that they were going to have to hitchhike home. Each day, Ellie would sneak small amounts of money into his wallet, letting him believe that it was a "loaves and fish" miracle. She and the kids finally told him the truth, and everyone had a good chuckle — well, almost everyone.

Before Keith ensnared her in blissful matrimony, Ellie attended the University of Utah. Although she enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom, she felt compelled to return to college to finish her degree in Elementary Education — a feat she accomplished in 1969, a time when adult education was uncommon and discouraged for mothers. After finishing her student teaching in Odgen, Utah, she signed on with the Murray School District straightaway. She worked at Bonnyview Elementary school until 1974, and then transferred to Viewmont Elementary, where she finished her 25-year teaching career. She felt blessed to be able to enroll her youngest son at her school, so he could be near her. Her school honored her with Teacher of the Year in 1979, and students and parents adored her. She enjoyed helping children overcome learning obstacles and recognize their strengths, which helped them build self-confidence. She taught yoga and meditation to her students before it was a commonplace activity. To keep her lessons captivating, Ellie infused them with creative stories and entertainment. In the 1980s, she told her students that she was an alien from the Planet Xaner, a tale that perpetuated for years.

Ellie had many interests. She loved the outdoors, even working at Zion National Park in the summer of her early college years, memories that she cherished. She was a talented seamstress, making clothes and costumes for herself and family. Ellie crafted a beautiful flower costume for her daughter, which helped her score an A for a graded interpretative dance in high school. As someone with a lovely singing voice, she enjoyed all types of music. To the chagrin of her husband, onlookers might find her swinging her hips and dancing in random places when the music moved her. She studied Hebrew and Jewish holiday traditions at the local synagogue. Visiting bookstores and libraries was a favorite pastime, as she loved poetry, mysteries, and knowledge. Ellie developed many dear friendships in book clubs and writing groups, opportunities that nurtured her social personality and innate literary talents. For relaxation, she would cackle at British comedies, and as the Agatha Christie fan she was, figure out the culprits in whodunit-type mysteries long before the rest of us.

As a type 1 diabetic, Ellie took excellent care of herself and showed great discipline with her diet. She rarely allowed refined sugar to pass her lips, and enjoyed vegetarian options. She showed her granddaughter how to make a bean-based veggie burger before Gardenburger was a well-known term. Salted peanuts were her guilty pleasure, often remarking that she couldn't stop herself from eating too many. Walking, hiking, dancing like no one was watching (they were, but who cared), and challenging the status quo were her favorite forms of exercise.

Ellie's adventurous nature took her to Europe (The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Italy, England, and Scotland), Canada, Israel, and fun places in the U.S., including Washington, Oregon, Florida, New Orleans, LA, Oahu, HI, and various national monuments and parks. She took several of these trips with her grandchildren, whom she loved dearly.

As a highly spiritual person, Ellie enjoyed her church callings, which included Relief Society, Sunday School, and Young Women. She employed her excellent teaching skills in these roles, with many praising her style as an effective and engaging way to understand the lessons. She had a strong testimony of Jesus Christ, and sought to be like Him, loving all, regardless of their beliefs, sexual orientation, or skin color. Ellie embraced friendships both

with those who were like her and those who were not, understanding that at the core, we all have similar human experiences and needs. For example, she maintained a long-standing relationship with a mentally unwell homeless woman, whom she regularly assisted with a compassionate ear and basic necessities.

Ellie was preceded in death by her beloved spouse, Keith; her parents, Charles Albert and Effie Dean; her brothers, Calvin and Edwin Warren; multiple aunts, uncles, other family members, friends, grandpups, and grandcats. She is survived by her four children: Ida Pendleton of SLC, Clay Pendleton of SLC, Adam (Brenda) Pendleton of Overton, NV, and Matthew Pendleton of Bradenton, FL; nine grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and multiple grandfurbabies.

The family wishes to thank Clay and Ida for their excellent care of Ellie, which allowed her to stay in her own home until the last week of her life. They also wish to extend appreciation to the University of Utah Healthcare System and St. Joseph Villa.
We'll look for you in the light, Ellie! Shalom.

As a public elementary school teacher, who paid for classroom supplies and materials out of her pocket, Ellie would want you to donate to a local public school teacher's classroom in lieu of sending flowers.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the family plans to have a celebration of life in August on what would be Ellie's 91st birthday. Until then, you are welcome to view the graveside services through Zoom this Thursday, January 14, at 12:15 p.m. Mountain Time. If you have any questions about attending the family viewing or graveside services in person, please contact Greta Leydsman. The family must adhere to CDC guidelines, which specify a maximum number of attendees. Additionally, the Salt Lake City Cemetery requires a signed liability waiver before joining the graveside service. The form will be available at Larkin Mortuary (260 East South Temple) during the family viewing.

You can view the graveside recording here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/9RsvuDavmhyTdXe9Mkog-kocr_qx-5Prc0nZLtiCosc2e8mK64OsDyaIwGAmi2RG.2_b4