

Gertrude “Trudy” Bastiaantje Vermaat Bowcutt

March 24, 1931 ~ May 31, 2024

Today, June 7, 2024, we celebrate the life of a daughter, niece, mom, grandma, great-grandma, friend, neighbor, and mentor to countless people over the past 93 years. Trudy is the daughter of Gertrude and Abraham Vermaat, and the niece of Nelly Van Campenhout. She spent most of her early years with this very tiny and close-knit family of four.

Trudy was born on March 24, 1931, at the Salt Lake County Hospital. Her mom had a hard time in the delivery room, but all went well, and a healthy baby girl came into this world. Mama was a housekeeper, and Daddy had various jobs in building maintenance and even selling high end men’s hats to keep food on the table during the Great Depression.

Mama wanted Trudy to be dainty and learn to sew, knit, embroider, and be a good housekeeper. However, Trudy was more interested in being out with the neighborhood kids digging forts in the fields, swinging on trees from ropes, and just doing outdoor stuff. Trudy was a self-described Tom Boy. After lots of begging Daddy, he finally gave in and bought her a brand-new pair of Levi’s pants because he didn’t want her doing all that boy stuff in a dress!

Trudy loved horses. The family across the field from her house had two horses, and they boarded more at a stable above the capitol building. She loved to feed, groom, and take care of them just to get a chance to ride them. One year, she was invited to ride in the 24th of July parade with one of the horses from the boarding stable. She walked to the stable by the capitol, rode the horse to Liberty Park with the parade, rode back to the stable, and walked back home all in one day.

Some of Trudy’s most favorite days included her and Daddy walking to the Jordan River and fishing all day. Daddy made his own pole but had bought a brand-new pole for Trudy. If anything was caught, they would sell the fish to the Liberty Park Zoo to feed to the animals. She often said she wouldn’t give up her childhood memories for anything in the world. Mom also remembered her parents trading their gas ration stamps during World War II for food, as they didn’t own a car. She also talked fondly of walking with her friends downtown to celebrate VJ Day (Victory Over Japan Day) in 1945.

Mom met my dad, Russ, her Sweetheart, when they were in elementary school. Mom and Dad hung out with some of the same friends, and that is how they met. As they got older and became closer friends, Dad would walk over half a mile to Mom’s house to visit. Dad’s mom had died when he was a toddler, and his dad was away for months on end to find carpentry jobs. Dad and his two older brothers were on their own, and times were very hard. Dad only had worn out hand me down clothes, very little supervision, and was poorly groomed. As a result, Mom’s father didn’t really want Dad hanging around with Mom. In fact, he told her to, “Stay away from that bum. He’s no

good, and he’s not to come around here anymore until he cleans up his act!” Dad got a job, bought some good clothes, and showed up at the door a short time afterward. Mom’s father didn’t recognize Dad! Dad and Mom’s father still didn’t get along, but at least after that, Dad was now allowed to come by the house. As time marched on, Dad and Grandpa became best friends.

When Mom and Dad were getting more serious and planning to get married, they both saved up their money for household goods, food, and had an apartment lined up to move into the day of their wedding. June 4, 1949, Mom and Dad were wed, and for 71 years they spent just about every day together. On March 17, 1953, a son was born. Now, the little house on Mead Avenue had Mom, Dad, Blackie the dog, and Me, Mike. In 1959, the freeway was to take Mom and Dad’s little house Grandpa had helped to build. Mom’s childhood house was also soon to be demolished. At this time, Mom and Dad bought the house across from the fairgrounds and invited Grandma and Grandpa to live in an apartment in the basement.

In the mid-1960s, Mom was employed as a helper in the kitchen of Utah Power and Light. After bidding up, she became the head switchboard operator wrangling those big, long cords to plug in and out to connect the various offices. Mom was fortunate to retire at the age of 55, and Dad at 62. For over 20 years they enjoyed time together camping with Dad’s big brother Bill and his clan. Mom and Dad became good friends with a former co-worker of Dad and his wife, Jerry and Darlene Van. Mom and Dad had many adventures with the Vans camping in Utah, Arizona, and California. Mom and Dad took trips to Tennessee, San Diego, Washington, Oregon, and Canada by car, plane, and train. Mom was always ready for a new adventure.

Mom and Dad were always helpful and supportive and were excited to become grandparents when Diana and I had our children, Amber and Austin. They were just as happy when Amber and Seth had their children, Teagan and Emorie, as they were now great-grandparents. Teagan lovingly called them Tootie and Whistle. Seeing her family happy made Mom happy. Mom has loved seeing how happy Austin and Bekah are, and getting to know their children, Cali and Abel. Mom loves Tim, too, and commented often how much Russ would’ve liked him. Mom often emphasized that being an only child, and also the mother of an only child, she had very little family, and was grateful for all who became family over the years.

Mom and Dad had various church callings, including Sunday School, Mutual, Young Womens, Scouts, transporting folks to and from church, and other positions. Mom and Dad were loyal temple workers and fulfilled their callings for many years. Great bonds and friendships were made with many during their service. In 2020, Mom’s loving husband passed away, and she was left without him physically by her side for the first time in over 70 years. As the years passed by, it became harder for Mom to get out and about. She always looked forward to visits from her friends from the ward. Her friends were genuine in their visits, and they had a great time-sharing treats and getting together for lunch. The few minutes they had planned to visit often turned into hours. Mom loved staying caught up on the goings on throughout the ward and neighborhood, and finding out how her friends and their families were doing. Even throughout the last few months, Mom’s friends would still call and check in on her. I don’t know all mom’s friends by name, but I do know that if you are one of Mom’s friends, I know that you know how much she loved you.

I’m sure that after Mom’s final breath here on Earth she was greeted by her loving husband Russell, her Mama and Daddy, Aunt Nelly, her best friend Grace, and all of her good friends and loyal pets. Thank you for all being a part of Mom’s life. I hope you will always remember her and take away with you a bit of joy she has given you. I know Mom was grateful to you for being a part of her life.

Funeral Services will be held Friday June 7, 2024 at 11:00 am at Larkin Mortuary, located at 260 E South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. A short viewing will be held prior to the service from 10:00-11:00 am. Interment will take place at Salt Lake City Cemetery.