

Grace Alida Vlam

December 17, 1930 ~ March 1, 2026

Lady Maat, Bodhisattva Grace

Valente Gracia

“Tot Ziens”

Cherished Sister-in-Law and Aunt

Beloved educator, artist, art historian, scholar, and genealogist, Grace Alida Hermine Vlam, age 95, peacefully passed onto the next phase of her Life’s Journey at her home in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 1st, at which time she “entered the Road” to return to her Heavenly Father, there to be greeted with exceeding joy by her parents, sister Vera, brothers Alvin and Heber, her best friend Joe, and many ancestral generations of friends and relatives who have gone before her.

She was born of Dutch/Swiss parentage on December 17, 1930, in Den Helder, The Netherlands, as the first daughter of Pieter Vlam and Hanna Melanie Gysler. With additional siblings, the family was sealed as an eternal family on June 9, 1938, in the Salt Lake Temple while en route to The Netherlands after her father’s last tour of Navy duty in Indonesia.

Educated in The Netherlands and Indonesia, and after enduring and surviving WWII in Holland, Grace emigrated with her family to Salt Lake City, Utah, where she continued her academic studies and her service in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In her chosen field of Art and Art History, she obtained degrees from BYU, the University of Utah, and earned her PhD from the University of Michigan. She taught for many years at various institutions of higher learning in Michigan, New York, and Utah, ending her teaching career at Salt Lake Community College. She is a published scholar on three continents.

In her early professional life she was very active as an artist, printmaker, and designer-craftsman, and served for two years as Curator and Acting Director of the Salt Lake Art Center on Finch Lane. To this career she added, in the 1980s, an avocational interest and eventual state certification in the field of Archaeology. As a member of the Utah Statewide Archaeological Society, she performed voluntary service at Anasazi digs in Southern Utah and in the Field School Lab of the MPC, Provo, by reconstructing ancient pottery.

Grace’s tenure on earth has been One Eternal Round as she strived to fulfill her divinely appointed mission in the Lord’s worldwide vineyard. Parallel to her academic endeavors ran Grace’s involvement with Genealogy. For her, Archaeology and Genealogy were closely intertwined, as both fields recover the past and bring it to light. Reconstructing an ancient pot out of excavated potsherds was virtually the same as reconstructing ancestral families out of bits of archival documentation. Committed to both fields from an early age, she took the opportunity to study and travel from the bastions of freedom of her native Netherlands and Switzerland to the ancient cultures

of Western Europe, the Mediterranean Basin, the Near East, and Asia, which included her beloved Indonesia, as well as Japan. The sacred architecture of these nations became her most significant field of study. These searches culminated in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, where she also met her sweetheart Joe Hill, who preceded her in death.

These travels and studies formed a lifelong complement to her deep involvement with genealogical research and Temple service. As an Accredited Genealogist for Netherlands research, she has served countless families and individuals worldwide. Her searches included discovering two Swiss archives of family history regarding her mother's name. This was something to yodel about, which Grace did for a while as a longtime member of the Swiss Chorus "Edelweiss." The edelweiss flower has been her cherished personal emblem.

Grace's service to the Lord also included the fulfillment of mission calls to The Netherlands, the Palmyra Pageant, Scotland/Northern Ireland, and Temple Square before it became a special mission field. She served as a Gospel Doctrine teacher in every ward she lived in, except Kyoto, and served on the Relief Society Stake Board and in its Presidency of the newly founded student stake of the University of Utah.

Balancing her boundless creative energies and multilingual skills between libraries, field work, the classroom, and the Temple, Grace searched out the archetypical truths that bind most cultures together. She learned that these were always in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ. From ancient Egypt she learned the all-prevailing concept of Ma'at, personified as a Goddess of Order (against chaos), truth, justice, harmony, and peace. From Buddhism she learned the principle of the Bodhisattva, who delays his (or her) own ultimate union with God in order to help others on earth also to achieve that goal. It represents a perfect correspondence with the Savior's request to become and act as Saviors on Mt. Zion.

Although Grace's life often overflowed with joy, she was not spared the dictum that there must be "opposition in all things." She is a survivor of World War II Nazi occupation of The Netherlands, as well as of the frequent adversarial attacks on her life and health. She has truly survived by the Grace of God and acknowledges that with profound gratitude, "au plus profond de moi" (Swiss song of memory).

Grace is survived by sister-in-law Marilee J. Vlam of Salt Lake City; eleven nieces and nephews: Melanie (Michael) Findeis, Clark (Chalyce) Vlam, Melissa (Anthony) Hammond, Curtis Vlam, Christopher (Ericka) Vlam, Marci (Jared) Draper, Mandi Vlam, Misti (Brad) Flint, Andrew Scott (Karyn) Vlam, Aimee (Michael) Seal, Cindi (Nate) Hill; and 27 great-nieces and nephews of Salt Lake City, Sterling, Kaysville, Hoytsville, Hawaii; and by numerous cousins and extended family members in the U.S.A., The Netherlands, Switzerland, and Australia. This global expansion is historically characteristic of the Dutch people, who have been everywhere, many times as pioneers. To all of these and to her many friends of different faiths, Grace extends her heartfelt Dutch expression, "Tot Ziens!", as she now continues her mission beyond the veil.

The family would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to Grace's ward and neighbors for their unconditional love, kindness and support over the years. She spent the last 2 years with Kristine Hilborn who would become one of her dearest friends. She provided the utmost superior care to our Aunt and kept her happy and comfortable during her final months.

Funeral services will be held at 11:30 AM on Saturday, March 7th, at the Wasatch 7th Ward (formerly known as the Mountain View Third Ward Chapel), 1889 South 1700 East, SLC UT. Family and friends may attend a viewing on Friday March 6th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, and again on Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:15 AM at the church building prior to the services.

The burial will follow at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations to the LDS Perpetual Education Fund are suggested.