

Ila Jean Macdonald Kofford

November 10, 1932 ~ August 25, 2021

Ila Jean Macdonald Kofford passed from mortality on August 25, 2021. During her 88 years of life, she was known by myriad names and titles including “Ila” and “sweetheart” by Dad, “Ila Jean” or “Jean” by her sisters and friends, and “Mom, “Grandma” and “Grandma Ila” by her 5 children, 20 grandchildren, and 34 (almost 35) great-grandchildren. As her family, we will certainly miss her and will, without a doubt, individually and collectively, fondly remember her and her eternal impact on our hearts, souls and individual self-worth’s—with every tender reminder ranging from Hallmark shows and ornaments, to hummingbirds, to Kanab, Navajo Lake, cloudy days, motorhomes, ruby slippers, and confetti . . . lots and lots of confetti.

Ila/Mom was born in Kanab, Utah on November 10, 1932. She is the third of four daughters born to Antone (“Tone”) Macdonald and Ila Hamblin. Her only living sister, Antonette “Toni” Macdonald [Monson], lives in California.

Mom frequently reminisced about Kanab and regularly shared stories of growing up there with all of her Macdonald and Hamblin cousins and the many adventures a tiny town provides, including swimming in the ponds along highway 89, outdoor dances at the watering tanks, her fancy dress and parasol which got ruined when she used it to carry blueberries, and her own private walks and childhood tea parties amongst her kindred dead in the Kanab cemetery.

At age 10, Ila and her family moved to Orem, Utah which is where she first met Dad (Cree-L or Cree). They both attended Lincoln High School. Dad reflects that while he was the quiet, shy and nerdy redhead, Mom/Ila was the ever popular and much adored student body vice president, member of the debate team, chorus and band member, star in the school plays, and “the list goes on.” As their posterity, there are no words to describe how eternally grateful we are, and will forever be, that Mom’s palpable faith and convictions toward God and Jesus Christ, and Their teachings touched and changed Cree's young adult heart such that on September 11, 1953 the awkward redhead and fancy Kanab-ite were married/sealed in the Manti, Utah Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Mom and Dad made their first marital abode in Orem, Utah where they had two daughters, Sandy Kim [Bennion]—Mesa, Arizona and Janie Kofford [Ford]—Bountiful, Utah. Dad says that for Ila, “life was as good as it gets.” However, amidst Mom’s plans of putting deep family roots into Orem soil, Dad was accepted to law school in southern California. So with Dad’s promise that they would return to Orem, Mom single-handedly packed-up their two daughters (Jane being only 2 weeks old) and the entirety of their worldly possessions and moved her small family to where Dad was already living in Monrovia, California. While in Monrovia, Ila and Cree had three more children: Bradley Cree Kofford (currently serving as a mission president in Brazil), Quinn Macdonald Kofford (Orem, Utah) and Tracy Kofford (Orem, Utah).

With another move to Arcadia, California, for the next 30+ years our family began to live and experience what Mom regularly described as “Camelot”—something which we have come to recognize Mom was not only living, but also pivotal in helping to create. During this time, Mom welcomed two more foster children (Nancy and Wally) into our home and her heart. In mortality, Mom was always actively involved in such things as school (best room-mom ever!), Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, sports, and church service--where her unique ability to add a touch of class and love, and her example of fierce always-striving-to-improve was felt by everyone.

Arcadia led to additional church service and yet another voluntary abandonment of Mom’s California home as she moved with Dad to live in New York where they served as mission president and mentors in the New York, New York mission and where, not surprisingly, her unique and palpable way of loving, encouraging, and defending and sharing her faith influenced the lives of hundreds of missionaries and thousands of lives in her now east-coast version of Camelot.

New York led to more church service and yet another move to Hong Kong where again Mom’s leadership and example of unwavering faith, personal and family sacrifices, and eternal commitment to God, marriage, and family was felt and experienced amongst an even broader cross-section of God’s children throughout the United States and Asia.

Upon returning from Asia, Mom and Dad settled in Bountiful, Utah where Mom’s church service did not end. This time her influence extended beyond the grave as she served with Dad as leaders of the Family History Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. As her family, we find it supernally fitting that after blessing the lives of so many of God’s children “here,” she was asked to put her unique and classy touch on labors of love that influenced the lives of so many of God’s children “there.”

And all the while, her awareness of, involvement in, and love for her family and posterity never missed a perfectly timed call, handwritten note, crisp two-dollar bill, personal and thoughtful gift/trinket, Grandma story hour, or confetti-filled card. There is no doubt that while in mortality, Mom/Grandma/Ila Jean/Jean or Sister Kofford had a unique way of creating comfortable feelings of love and acceptance and encouragement . . . all with a touch of class and perfection.

But of all that, I suspect her most lasting legacy to her family and friends will be her never-ending adoration of Dad, her unwavering faith (no matter the storm), and her observable and distinctly tangible testimony of and relationship with God and Jesus Christ that permeated her every thought and action and prayer—which were almost always selflessly about us, with us, or for us.

One of Mom’s mantras has become, “I’ll see you in the morning.” She taught us that we will. We will miss her until we do. Until then, we anticipate those tender moments where, when we look and listen closely, we will continue to experience her ongoing influence in our lives and feel her eternal love for, awareness of, and constant cheerleading for each of us on a personal level. As she regularly said, (to sweet Dad and the rest of us) “I love you more today than yesterday, less than tomorrow.” Acknowledging Heavenly Father’s magnificent plan of happiness where families are eternal, we don’t expect anything about that will change. Us to her and her to us.

Ila is survived by her husband Cree Kofford, daughters Sandy Kim Bennion (David), Janie Kofford Ford (Steve), sons Bradley Cree Kofford (Rachelle), Quinn Macdonald Kofford (Jana Lynn) and daughter Tracy Kofford, and sister Antonette Macdonald Monson (Dick).

In honor of Mom’s request, there will not be a viewing the morning of her funeral. However, friends and family are invited to a visitation and celebration of her life from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on September 10, 2021 at the Foothill Ward Building, located at 4375 S. Bountiful Blvd Bountiful, UT 84010. Funeral services will occur the next day, Saturday September 11, 2021 at the same chapel beginning at 11:00 a.m. Mom will be buried at the East Lawn Memorial Cemetery located on the benches of Provo--close to and overlooking her first Orem home from which most of it began . . . and to which Dad promised her they would ultimately return.

The service will be lived streamed and will be available to watch at the following link:
https://zoom.us/j/99724293161?pwd=WTBoU3NXd2dmaEE2cDVweXoxSDhGdz09
Meeting ID: 997 2429 3161
Passcode: 002750

In lieu of flowers please donate to the Operation Underground Railroad (OUR) 5121 So Murray Blvd SLC, UT 84123 (801) 358-8424 Scott Snow, or charity of your choice.