

Jeanette Catherine Douglas Watkins

September 24, 1934 ~ September 13, 2025

The life of Jeanette Catherine Douglas Watkins was quite an adventure. Born on September 24, 1934 in Auckland, New Zealand to Hugh Douglas and Catherine MacFarlane, Jeanette was a relatively shy young woman with a fierce intellect. She completed high school by the age of fifteen and two years later boarded a steam ship headed for America to pursue new opportunities. After three and a half weeks at sea, Jeanette arrived in Vancouver, Canada, and took a train to Santa Monica, California to visit her Auntie Belle Douglas before traveling by train to her ultimate destination, Salt Lake City, Utah.

As a receptionist in an accounting firm, Jeanette put herself through college and graduate programs at the University of Utah, first with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting (with the highest graduating GPA), next with a Master's in Business Administration (the first woman to receive an MBA from the University of Utah) and then with a Juris Doctor degree (graduating top in her class). She clerked for the US Circuit Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, before engaging in private practice as an expert in tax law. Jeanette is one of "The First 100" women lawyers licensed to practice in the State of Utah.

Jeanette met and fell in love with another lawyer, Reed Andersen Watkins, and they were married on December 17, 1965. Reed and Jeanette had four children together, Andrea, Gary, Mark and Diana, who enjoy a close relationship with their half-siblings Stephen, Joseph, Karla and John. In 1969, Jeanette retired as a lawyer to be at home with her children while they were young. She later returned to her professional life, this time as a CPA with the firm Hansen, Barnett & Maxwell, where she attained partner status. Jeanette became involved with numerous CPA associations and served on the board of the Utah Housing Authority.

Jeanette was a devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She and Reed joined The Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 1980, singing together until Reed's retirement in 1987 after which Jeanette enjoyed an additional seven years with the Choir. This opportunity allowed Jeanette and Reed to travel all over the world, singing in some of the most well-known venues. Perhaps most memorable was the Choir's trip to Jeanette's native New Zealand in the summer of 1988. Jeanette stayed close to her Douglas family, returning to New Zealand often with Reed and their children. She enjoyed her New Zealand culture, frequently hosting dinner parties at her Ensign Peak home for fellow New Zealanders who had also made Utah their home.

Jeanette's greatest joy in life was her marriage of fifty-seven years to Reed, who pre-deceased her on January 18, 2023, and her children and grandchildren.

Jeanette died peacefully in her home on September 13, 2025, just shy of her ninety-first birthday. She is now reunited with Reed, in the happiest place of all, and although we miss her, we are so grateful for their joyful reunion.

A graveside service will be held on Saturday, September 20th, 2025, at 1pm at Larkin Sunset Lawn Cemetery, 2350 E. 1300 S. SLC UT. A viewing will be held prior at Larkin Sunset Lawn from 11am – 1pm.