

# Joanne Beth Kilts Van Boerum

*March 18, 1939 ~ September 21, 2021*

“Well, I’m not ready to give up yet!” These were some of the last words she said, and were among the principles that shaped her life.

Joanne Beth Kilts Van Boerum was born March 18, 1939, in Ogden, Utah, to Elizabeth Brown Kilts and Earl Sylvester Kilts. When she was just three years old, her father died in an accident. In 1948 her mother married Merlin Walter Webb who was Joanne’s dad and lovingly raised her as if she were his own. Joanne returned to her Heavenly Father on September 21, 2021 -- peacefully, and surrounded by her husband, her six children and their spouses.

Joanne attended and graduated from Ogden High School and Weber College, then continued her studies at Utah State University. She was popular among student bodies and ran for and was elected to various positions of leadership. It was while she was still a student at Ogden High School that she met the love of her life, J. Howard Van Boerum, who was studying at Weber College. Their relationship flourished and, when a year later Howard made the decision to serve a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joanne agreed to wait for him. And she did. While on his mission, Howard purchased diamonds from a jeweler in Holland and, ten days after completing his mission and returning to Ogden, asked Joanne to marry him. Two and a half months later, on August 10, 1960, they married in the Salt Lake Temple. That was more than 61 years ago!

While a student and young wife, Joanne honed and was appreciated for her skills as she worked for the Bon Marche in Ogden, and then as a secretary at Hill Air Force Base. Joanne’s greatest desire was to be a stay-at-home mom where she could focus all of her attention on her family. The entire family was continually blessed as she wore her body out fulfilling this divine calling. Howard’s career allowed her to do what she desired.

Howard was still a student when their first child was born and the young couple budgeted and sacrificed to enable Joanne to stay at home with their daughter Lori. Over the next seventeen years, five more children joined the Van Boerum family: Heidi, Don, Drew, Jane and Joni. The children always knew that they were the priority for Joanne. She never missed a carpool, a sporting event, a dance or piano recital or the opportunity to sew a prom dress -- sometimes all in one day, with a family that spanned seventeen years. The Van Boerum home was a favorite among friends who remember Joanne for her welcoming kindness, her stocked pantry, and the delicious homemade baked goods.

Joanne’s support of Howard enabled him to flourish in his career. This made it possible for her to be a mother and homemaker for the duration of her life. Joanne made sure that the family had nutritious meals as a family each evening, and that the laundry was spotless and ironed. Howard and Joanne made a great team.

Joanne’s children were blessed to learn many valuable lessons from her, among them: if a job is worth doing, it’s worth doing well. Two wrongs don’t make a right. Sticks and stones. That cleaning the kitchen is not finished until the sink is rinsed and shining. If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all. She taught that love is unconditional, that dreams can come true, and that you can be whatever you want to be. By example she taught honesty, selflessness, perfectionism, compassion, endurance and grace.

Joanne was the consummate hostess. Sunday dinners at the Van Boerum house were quite the production, especially as in-laws and grandchildren joined the family and Joanne kept track of the likes and dislikes of each; ensuring that there were both green and yellow vegetables to meet the individual preferences -- which sometimes meant the choice of six!

The extended Van Boerum family always looks forward to the annual summer trip to Sun Valley. Howard and Joanne rent condos and host their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren for a week of summer fun. Joanne always spent the preceding weeks baking and freezing cookies to take. She counted one year and realized that she’d baked a variety of over 100 dozen (yes, 100 DOZEN) cookies distributed to each condo, and ravenously enjoyed by all. She knew which cookie was the favorite of each in her family and made sure to have plenty. You could always find a puzzle on the table in Joanne’s place and it was a gathering spot for grandchildren who enjoyed the challenge of the puzzle and the loving conversation with Grandma, each of them certain that they were the favorite.

For all of her life, Joanne had a strong testimony of the gospel. She demonstrated Christlike love and service in everything she did. Joanne and Howard served together in the Salt Lake Temple for a number of years until an injury to Joanne’s leg prevented them from continuing. In her ward, Joanne served in Relief Society presidencies, Primary presidencies, and various other callings.

At the young age of 30 years, Joanne was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis and she faced it with determination to not give in. She routinely expressed thanks to her Rheumatologists, Dr. Cecil Samuelson and Dr. Daniel Clegg whose skilled care contributed to her health and quality of life. Joanne endured 50 years of various immune-suppressing treatments and medications along with their side effects, and fought the resulting deterioration with grace until the very end. Joanne spent the last two weeks of her life in her son, Don’s, Shock Trauma Intensive Care Unit at the Intermountain Medical Center being attended to by him and her other doctor son, Drew, along with the rest of the family and an army of specialists. The family wishes to thank all the doctors and nurses who compassionately saw to her care during this time. Joanne’s heart and spirit did not give up, but ultimately her body did.

Joanne was preceded in death by her parents and by her grandson, Brock Butler. She is survived by her husband Howard, and by their children Lori and Roger Haglund, Heidi and Brian Monson, Don and Heather Van Boerum, Drew and Melody Van Boerum, Jane and Devin Healy, and Joni and Spencer Chipping. 23 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren with one more great-granddaughter on the way round out the family. Joanne is also survived by her sister Barbara Leatham and her brother Dale Webb.

A viewing will be held Thursday, September 30, 2021, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 East 1300 South in Salt Lake City. Funeral services will be held Friday, October 1, 2021, at 11:00 am at the Crestview Ward, 2795 East Crestview Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84108. Family and friends may visit from 9:30 to 10:30 that morning. Interment will follow at Larkin Sunset Lawn. For those who are unable to attend the services in person, the family invites you to join via Zoom at https://zoom.us/j/99284634743 A free Zoom account is required to join.