



Joyce Ann Waters DeForest

November 25, 1935 ~ May 7, 2025

Joyce Ann Waters DeForest—beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother, sister, aunt, teacher, and devoted disciple of Jesus Christ—passed away surrounded by her loved ones on May 7, 2025, in Draper, Utah. She was born on November 25, 1935, in Wheatland, Wyoming, to Marian “Grace” Barkdoll and Robert Benton Waters.

The youngest of three children, Joyce grew up alongside her older brother Neil and sister Delores in Laramie, Wyoming. Summers spent at the family ranch—roaming hills, climbing Windy Peak, and embracing the wide-open Wyoming skies—instilled in her a lifelong love of nature, a sense of adventure, and a resilient spirit.

Joyce earned her degree in music from the University of Wyoming, with an emphasis in piano performance. She also minored in visual arts—an early reflection of her creative talent and lifelong appreciation for the beauty in the world. Later in life, she pursued graduate studies in music at Brigham Young University, further honing her talents and deepening her passion for teaching.

Joyce met the love of her life, Robert “Duke” DeForest, at a high school basketball game—a meeting that blossomed into a lifelong romance. They were married on June 1, 1957, in Laramie, Wyoming, and later sealed for time and all eternity in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This June would have marked their 68th wedding anniversary.

Together, Joyce and Duke raised five children: Debra (Brian) Maughan, Robert (Bente) DeForest, Richard (Shannon) DeForest, DeAnn (John) Nixon, and Jennifer (Damon) Hatfield. Their posterity flourished with 25 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

A gifted pianist, Joyce filled her home and community with music. Through decades of piano teaching, she mentored and inspired hundreds of children, nurturing a love of music that echoes through her family and beyond. She also served as president of the Utah Symphony Guild, a role that reflected both her commitment to public service and her enduring love for music.

Joyce served faithfully in numerous callings in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout her life. In addition to teaching and leadership roles, she blessed her congregation with her musical talents—frequently playing the piano and organ in sacrament meetings and accompanying choirs and special musical numbers.

Whether behind the keys or lifting others through service, she offered her time and talents with humility, warmth, and a quiet sense of purpose. Her devotion to the gospel was visible in every corner of her life.

Above all, Joyce was unwavering in her devotion and service to three things: her Savior, her eternal companion Duke, and her family. She loved unconditionally and wholeheartedly, with a warmth that made everyone feel uniquely valued. Each of her children and grandchildren believed they were her favorite—because she had a remarkable gift for making them feel like the most important person on Earth. Her life was a quiet testament to faith, grace, and generosity of spirit. Her legacy—especially her steadfast commitment to the Savior, Jesus Christ—will live on through her posterity, echoing in generations to come.

Joyce is survived by her loving husband, Duke DeForest; her sister, Delores Mossler; and an extended posterity of over 80 children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Grace and Robert Waters; her brother, Neil Waters; her sister-in-law, Carolyn Waters; her father-in-law, Franklin DeForest; her mother-in-law, Ruth DeForest; her sister-in-law, Julia DeForest; her brother-in-law, Al Mossler; her granddaughter, Camille Maughan; and her son-in-law, Nathan Miller.

Funeral services will be officiated by Larkin Sunset Gardens. Friends and loved ones are invited to attend a public viewing on Friday, May 16, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Wanderwood Ward building, located at 2195 East Pepperwood Drive (10900 South) in Sandy, Utah. A second viewing will be held on Saturday morning, May 17, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., followed by the funeral service at 11:00 a.m. Interment will take place immediately afterward at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, Utah. The funeral will be livestreamed and can be accessed by clicking the "Watch Services" button above.