

LaVon Clive Decker

October 14, 1925 ~ September 1, 2021

LaVon Clive Decker, 95, passed away peacefully on September 7, 2021, in her Salt Lake City home. Her life was full of music and service, and she was a tireless supporter of and advocate for her family.

LaVon was born into a music-filled home, the daughter of Joseph Campbell Clive and Winifred Gilroy Clive, in October of 1925. When she was quite young, her grandfather made learning the violin fun, saying, “Vonnie, let’s have a little go at it.” She also learned piano as a child, following in her talented older sister Elaine’s footsteps. They formed a family quartet, with cello, two violins, and piano, and had many quartet and trio performances together. She was often recruited to accompany her father’s cello students on the piano, which she claimed was great for sight reading. Her parents recognized she also had a beautiful voice, and she began vocal lessons at age 11. She won her first vocal accolade and a gold medal from the Utah State Fair competition at age 15, and she went on to solo with choirs at South and East High School, the University of Utah, and Utah State. She had a leading role in South High’s production of “The Serenade” and in two Pioneer Theatre productions. During WWII, she sang for the soldiers at Ft. Douglas, Kearns Bushnell Hospital, and the Veterans Hospital. After the war, she moved to New York City to attend Columbia University and study opera at the Juilliard School of Music.

While at home for Christmas break in 1946, she became engaged to Herbert Wayne Decker, who had returned from active duty in Germany following WWII. They were married in 1947 in the Salt Lake Temple by Harold B. Lee. They had four children, and LaVon spent countless hours helping each one. She took great care to ensure their education, including musical education, chauffeuring to lessons and helping in any way she could. She later continued this care with her grandchildren, often spending afternoons teaching them reading, writing, and music. She was always thinking of what she could do to help someone, be it family, friends, or community. Her thoughts frequently turned to who needed help and how she could help them; then she went into action.

LaVon shared her fine musical talents throughout her life, both professionally and as a volunteer. Even when she and her sister were both married and busy with families, they continued to perform throughout the Salt Lake Valley. For several years she took classical quartets to local hospitals to bring music to patients. She served in numerous leadership roles during her life, taking on many key projects for the Symphony and Opera Guild, and serving as president of the Pioneer Theatre Guild, the Alpha Chi Omega House Corporation, Alpha Zeta Alpha and the Kappa Sigma Mother’s Club. She served for 10 years as a hostess/guide at the Church Office Building and was a charter member of the Assistance League of SLC, for whom she led bus tours of SLC.

LaVon and Wayne traveled to many world destinations together, along with family and friends. She loved spending time with her family, whether it was at their Holladay Park cabin, on a skiing holiday, or around the backyard pool. One could never leave her home hungry or without a care package.

LaVon was preceded in death by her husband Wayne, son Joseph, and sister Elaine. She is survived by her children, Bruce Decker (Melanie), Bret Decker (Tamara Smith), Lori Decker Whiteley (Jeff); her grandchildren, Karina Decker Herman, Morgan Decker, Neil Decker, Marin Decker, Faroe Decker Robinson, and Austin Whiteley; seven great-grandchildren, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

May Heaven’s music be a bit sweeter now because of you joining, Mom.

A family graveside service will be held. In lieu of flowers, please give to the Missionary Fund of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or the Assistance League of Salt Lake City.