

Margery Sorensen Cannon

May 15, 1926 ~ November 8, 2023

Salt Lake City, Utah – Margery “Marg” Sorensen Cannon passed away peacefully on November 8, 2023, at age 97. A wreath above her bed bore a motto that infused her life: “Today I Choose Joy.” She radiated that joy through her legendary homemaking, writing, artwork, and service to her family and Church.

Marg was born on May 15, 1926, in Salt Lake City, to Ethel Melville and Horace August Sorensen. The eldest of four children, she preceded her twin brother Maynard by minutes, then years later, sister Beth Ann and brother Stanford arrived.

Marg and Maynard maintained a close connection for 97 years, and it was his death on September 19 that triggered her rapid decline in health.

The Sorensen children began life on Harvard Avenue, then grew up in East Millcreek at their parents’ Edgemont Farm stables, where Marg became an award-winning equestrian and where the family’s popular Pioneer Village was later established.

After graduating from Granite High School, Marg attended the University of Utah, where she joined Chi Omega sorority. Through the decades, she met regularly with sorority sisters and other lifelong friends.

At 20, she met William “Bill” Wareing Cannon, whom she married in the Salt Lake Temple on Friday, September 13, 1946. Friday the 13th remained their lucky day.

As newlyweds, she and Bill were called to serve a couples’ mission in the Hawaiian Islands. Their first of eight children, Michael, was born on the island of Maui. When Marg discovered she was expecting David, she and baby Mike returned to her parents’ home in Salt Lake, where she delivered David and waited for Bill to complete their mission.

As a young mother, Marg entered the Mrs. Utah competition on a whim. Surprised when she won, she initially declined to proceed to the national event, not wanting to be away from her four children. But pageant officials talked her into competing for the title of Mrs. America in Florida, and when insiders there said she was slated to win, she bowed out again and the first runner-up was crowned. Glamorous and talented enough to be Mrs. America, Marg, as always, put family first.

A legendary hostess, Marg’s gifts for decorating and cooking were unsurpassed. She loved to draw, paint, sculpt, and sew, and in her 60’s, took up doll-making. To no one’s surprise, she became a master dollmaker, winning many national awards. In honor of her pioneer heritage, she created a piece entitled “Rescued by Angels,” now on display at the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum. The work features an angel helping weary pioneers push a handcart through rough terrain.

More than her love of writing, art and homemaking, Marg cherished being a mother and teacher to her children and grandchildren. When her second grade teacher asked her 90 years ago what she wanted to be in the future, Marg answered “a mother and teacher!”

The youngest of Marg’s eight children, Matthew, was born 26 years after her first -- a year after her oldest grandchild. Within this diverse nest, she practiced and honed the Christ-like art of loving unconditionally.

A faithful member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Marg loved her Savior and his gospel. Decades after their first mission to Hawaii, Marg and Bill returned to preside over the same mission, which had expanded to include several other South Seas islands. Upon Bill’s retirement, they returned again to Hawaii to assist the Church’s Zions Securities in Laie.

Marg loved the Polynesian people, and Hawaii became a second home for her extended family, many of whom lived, worked, and attended school there.

Marg held many other Church leadership positions. As a member of the Primary General Board, she wrote for The Friend magazine and co-created the legendary CTR Ring, which reminded children worldwide to “Choose the Right.” On the Primary Curriculum Board and later the Young Women General Board, she co-authored manuals and programs still in use today. She also served on the Church Correlation Committee.

Ever a writer, Marg wrote two books for her family. The first, a children’s book co-authored with a friend, entitled Young Joseph Smith, and the second, Children Learn What They Live and Live What They Learn.

She continued writing until the very end, wearing out an old electric typewriter composing faith-promoting letters to family and friends. Her last letter, soon to be a family keepsake, lay finished on her desk but not yet mailed.

In 2002, Bill passed away in his sleep. The following year, Marg married Wayne Wiscomb, a lifelong friend whose wife Helen had passed shortly after Bill. Wayne died in 2020.

As she entered the winter of her life, Marg embraced and served her fellow seniors, especially at Legacy House where she chose to live out her final two years. She will be well-remembered there as a self-appointed “ministering angel” to the other residents.

During Marg’s final days, family from around the country attended her bedside to bid farewell. She passed away with daughter Merilee, her near-constant companion, at her side.

Marg was preceded in death by husbands Bill and Wayne, brothers Stanford and Maynard, and son Layne. She is survived by her sister, Beth Ann McDonald, and her children, Michael (Patty), David, daughter-in law Mary Cannon Smith (Layne, deceased), Wendy, Robert (Judy), Merilee Sine (Glorn, deceased), Christian (Nanette), Matthew (Carol), 22 grandchildren, and 28 great grandchildren.

Funeral Services will be Saturday, December 2 at Larkin Mortuary, 260 East South Temple, in Salt Lake. Visitation at 10:00 AM will precede the funeral at 11:00 in the Larkin Chapel. Dedication of the grave will follow at Salt Lake City Cemetery, 200 “N” Street.