

Marilyn Fowles Spafford

July 23, 1933 ~ April 12, 2024

Marilyn Fowles Spafford returned home on April 12, 2024, after living a full life of 90 years, to what must have been a joyful reunion with her parents, husband, and three of her children. She was born July 23, 1933, in Mt. Pleasant, Utah to John Weldon Fowles and Ruth Nielson. Marilyn's youth was filled with hard work on the farm and exciting times in school. She served as the yearbook editor and enjoyed an active social life with good friends at North Sanpete High School. She also loved to dance. Music was an important part of her life. She played the piano and organ in her small town for church meetings, funerals, and weddings. Later in Salt Lake City, she sang with the Schubert Singers. She made sure each of her children took piano lessons and instilled the love of music in her children. She was almost never without a musical retort, singing answers to her children's questions with a phrase or verse from a popular song, hymn, or Broadway show!

After high school, she attended the University of Utah on a scholarship, participated in Lambda Delta Sigma and worked as a secretary—a job she truly loved. She met Reed Sterling Spafford during this time, and they were married on December 28, 1953 in the Salt Lake Temple. One of Marilyn's greatest strengths was her unyielding support of and contributions to Sterling's successes in business, church, and civic leadership. It was clear to all who knew the Spaffords that without Marilyn there would have been no Sterling. She was the clear force of nature and nurture in the home as a mother of five; making sacrifices, and creating miraculous homemaking results. Her children and neighbors knew nothing of the challenges Marilyn endured while raising children and making abundance out of little. She baked bread and gave some away each time. She was frugal, lived on a strict budget, sewed clothing for the girls, prepared homemade meals, provided a stable home life and taught service by example. She carpooled and shuttled seemingly endless activities for her children. She made sure her kids took swimming and tennis lessons, again enriching their lives with abundance during scarcity. She enjoyed tennis and even surprised her kids with a church tennis championship trophy. Marilyn loved to weed in her yard, read and enjoyed her participation in a book club. She loved the opera arias.

Even after actual abundance finally came, Marilyn kept her hands busy and her mind alert in retirement by crocheting hundreds of hot pads to be given as gifts to family, friends, and neighbors.

Marilyn had a strong testimony of the Gospel of Christ and was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She served in nearly every organization, and cherished her service with her husband as Mission Leaders in the Calgary Canada Mission. She loved those missionaries and they loved her.

After their mission years, Marilyn and Sterling retired to St. George, Utah, where Marilyn loved living until 2019, and until her death lived near family in Pueblo, Colorado. She loved reading the Book of Mormon every day, and she reflected upon her years in the Holladay Stake and the Monument Park Stake with great pleasure.

She is survived by her daughter, Susan (Dale) Buxton, her son David Spafford, and her only sibling and sister, Arline (Roy) Arnold. She leaves behind 21 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Reed Sterling Spafford, children Michael Spafford, Joni Whitney, and Paul Spafford, her daughter-in-law Susan Bourne Spafford (David) and two step-grandchildren, Arika Simper and Matthew Simper. Marilyn wished to express her gratitude to supportive spouses of Michael, Joni, and Paul: Anita Ashmead (Michael), Hal Whitney (Joni), and Kathy Spafford (Paul).

Her greatest attributes—resilience, positive attitude, and her effervescent smile, will be greatly missed by everyone she leaves behind. Her hand-written birthday and holiday cards and “checks” will be remembered for years to come.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, April 26, 2024, at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, UT. A visitation will be held Thursday evening from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and again on Friday morning from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. prior to the services. Interment Larkin Sunset Gardens.

If you would like to watch the recorded funeral services, please click on the blue “Watch Services” button above.