

MarJean Clark Wilcox

February 11, 1933 ~ December 6, 2024

MarJean Clark Wilcox passed away in her home on December 6, 2024, surrounded by her six children. She was born on February 11, 1933, in Salt Lake City, Utah to Vernon J and Betsey Hislop Banks Clark.

MarJean grew up in Salt Lake City where she attended West High School and graduated from the University of Utah with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She served as a missionary in the Eastern Canada Mission from 1956-57. On October 23, 1959, she married Blaine Hawkes Wilcox in the Salt Lake Temple. Shortly thereafter, MarJean and Blaine spent four years in Chicago where MarJean taught second grade in public school and Blaine attended dental school. They returned with a dental degree and a daughter and Salt Lake City was home for the rest of their lives.

MarJean continued teaching school until the birth of their second child. She took a 22-year hiatus from professional teaching to mother her six children and then returned to second grade at Nibley Park Elementary School. There, she created a royal classroom with a castle built of wood that could fit the whole class, complete with turrets they could crawl in, and a purple velvet throne–all enthusiastically built by Blaine. She filled the castle with fancy pillows for the children to sit on while reading and parents made royal robes for the students to wear. This regal decor celebrated the royalty she saw in every child. Each student had a crown they could adorn with jewels earned for academic excellence. The crowning jewel was a large purple gem, the Jewel of the Heart. It was presented to a child for showing true character–a kind gesture, a selfless act, an honest deed, something heroic she saw in that child and each child received one. Her motto for teaching and parenting was, “ignore the behavior you don’t want and praise the behavior you do,” and praise she did!

MarJean adored people. She saw the best in them, which helped them realize it too. “You can do more than you think you can” was her mantra. MarJean celebrated individuality. She championed differences of opinion, thought, and style with her iconic phrases: “Isn’t it great we’re all different,” and “wouldn’t the world be a boring place if we were all the same?” MarJean had a gift for embracing people, including those who felt unincluded, so they knew they were valued, they were loved, and they belonged. She gushed praise and expressions of “thank you” and “I love you,” telling visitors how much she liked their shoes, how cute they were, and how much she liked being with them. MarJean’s encouragement inspired people to share their talents; they would do somersaults, dance, and sing. If someone didn’t feel inclined to perform, she encouraged them to clap with her and experience the joy of celebrating together.

Growing up with all brothers and no sisters, MarJean was comfortable being different. This served her well as she was frequently called to leadership councils where there were few or no sisters. MarJean was something extraordinary; she contributed unique insights to reach creative solutions. Her favorite calling was teaching, but she

also served as president of ward and stake Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society, and on the general Relief Society board from 1990-1997. MarJean and Blaine served together as missionaries in the Salt Lake City East Mission from 2013-2015 and as Salt Lake Temple ordinance workers from 2003-2019.

MarJean is survived by her children: Jennifer, Betsy (Robert Anderson), Nathan (Michelle Mangelson), Emily (Michael Cummings), Adam (Amy Hawkins), and Brigham (Macy Soffe); 26 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren; her younger brother, Max; and her surrogate sister and buddy since second grade, Rebecca Winters Bennett. She is preceded in death by her husband, parents, and older brothers, J and Dean.

Family and friends may visit Friday, January 3rd from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E South Temple in Salt Lake City, or Saturday, January 4th from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the Parley's Fifth Ward building, 2615 Stringham Avenue in Salt Lake City. Funeral services will be Saturday, January 4th at 11:00 a.m. in the Parley's Fifth Ward chapel and interment at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, share a smile, give a compliment, make a friend, read with a child, see the good in a situation, tell someone, "I love you," or contribute to a cause that does likewise.

To watch the services remotely via Zoom please click the blue "Watch Services" tab at the top of the obituary or by clicking the link below.

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