

Rhea Kathleen Davis

September 8, 1928 ~ May 15, 2024

At age 95, Kathleen passed graceful through this veil of tears on May 15, 2024. There were many waiting for her on the other side with great anticipation.

She was born on September 8, 1928 in Logan, Utah, to H. Verne Wiser and Nellie Riddick. Her father was a captain in the army and during the early years the family lived in Utah, Colorado and New Mexico. She attended South High School in Salt Lake City where she met Claude E. Purles. The two married young and brought five children into the world. They later divorced. She married Melvin Davis in 1987. Together they shared many daring adventures, notably whenever Mel was driving. Together they loved golf, biking, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing and traveling.

As a single mom, Kathleen worked as an accounting clerk for the University of Utah. After retirement, she volunteered for many years at the Huntsman Cancer Institute. There she was loved and honored as Volunteer of the Year. She delighted in lifting the spirits of patients and family at the Institute as she pushed her goodie cart through the Center. She especially loved Tuesdays (Twosdays) when recipients would receive two of whatever they wanted from her cart.

Kathleen embraced learning. She attended numerous classes on various and sundry subjects. She particularly loved learning about Jesus Christ and His Infinite Atonement. She adored words and wrote dozens of poems that celebrated life, love, springtime, and clouds.

The two worldly temptations she willingly surrendered to were chocolate and Diet Coke. She could be enticed with either one. She embraced the maxim that “The answer to any problem is chocolate.” She was careful to practice what she preached.

Beyond chocolate and Diet Coke, she couldn’t get enough of favorite authors Dick Francis, David Baldacci, Daniel Silva or Lilian Jackson Braun. She never passed up an opportunity to attend live theater or take in a good movie. She treasured family gatherings, lunches with grandkids, singing in the ward choir, walking, and gardening. She was always up for an episode of Murder She Wrote, Numbers, or any other good TV mystery.

Kathleen was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She taught her children to love, serve, and walk the covenant path.

Kathleen is survived by brothers Clare and Richard Wiser, her children Michael Purles (Jerry), Marc Purles (Terri), Claudia West, Karen Mangum (Scott) and Teresa Elwood, along with 27 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Mel; son-in-law, Bob Elwood; and granddaughter, Tracy Purles.

A family graveside service at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East 10600 South in Sandy, Utah, will be held on Monday, May 20 at 11:00 AM, followed by a celebration of her life. The family wishes to offer heart-felt thanks to Melanie Jeppsen and her caregivers at Spring Gardens Memory Care.