

Shirley Carrol Crookston

November 5, 1929 ~ August 31, 2025

Shirley Carrol Crookston (95) passed away on August 31, 2025. She was a master teacher. What's more, she taught in junior high schools throughout her career. Most impressive. She taught Spanish and one former student explained that Ms. Crookston "lit a fire in her heart for languages." This student went on to study French in college and eventually became Shirley's colleague teaching language in secondary education. Mentoring and educational leadership are two of Shirley's noteworthy accomplishments in her quarter-of-a-century career.

Shirley was born on November 5, 1929, in American Fork, Utah, to Elisabeth and George Crookston. Early in her life, she developed an understated dry sense of humor. Her wit came subtly, was quick and well-timed. In the words of a fellow faculty member, "Shirley had the driest, funniest humor. She cracked me up! Her humor lifted and inspired us all to be better and have happy days."

Her sense of humor was remarkable, but it emerged from a very modest and unassuming disposition. She never craved the spotlight and had no desire to dominate conversations. She was quiet and content to let those around her speak and be the center of attention. Her closest friends recalled that Shirley "just took it all in." But when she did speak, one could expect thoughtful comments and compliments that informed, made you laugh, or both.

In addition to her profession in education, Shirley was a veteran of the conflict in Korea. She served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) for three years. Her time in the military brought an elevated level of discipline to her daily experiences, which complimented her innate penchant for detail and order. When approaching a problem, she was methodical and took care to gather all available information to make informed decisions. This allowed her to be a wonderful listener and counselor to solve problems big and small.

Shirley spent sixty-five years with her best friend, Jean Van Dyke. They built a life together on many fronts. This was particularly evident in their beautiful home and yard. They purchased their home at a time when banks would not give loans to women. In response, they pooled their resources and undertook the enterprise on their own.

Shirley could swing a hammer as readily as she could give gentle care to marigolds, the result being a vibrant home inside and out. Remodels to the house and improvements to the yard were accomplished with professional grade skill and quality. Through it all, their home and yard were merely extensions of how they built people and community around them. Their home was a gathering place that exuded joy, laughter, and fellowship.

To be sure, Shirley Crookston modeled charity, kindness, and generosity. Her colleagues, students, friends, and family were honored to partake in her goodness. The world is a warmer and more enriched place because of her life well lived.

A graveside service will be conducted on Monday, September 8 at 10:00 AM at Larkin Sunset Gardens in Sandy (1950 E. Dimple Dell Road, 106th South).