

Sylvia Elizabeth Beck Mathis

November 18, 1944 ~ January 4, 2024

Sylvia Elizabeth Beck Mathis passed peacefully from this life to the next surrounded by family on January 4, 2024. She was 79 years old.

A gifted and empathetic communicator, Sylvia was disciplined, selfless and kind. She was thoughtful and intentional in every word and deed. Her life was framed by the values of compassion, courage, creativity, generosity, integrity and faith. Sylvia was respected, trusted, and loved by everyone who knew her.

She will be missed by her devoted husband of 56 years James (Jim) Mathis, her five children Jason Mathis (Jeannie), Jamie Slack (Todd), Jill Gibby (Nate), Jonessa White (Jake) and Jaron Mathis (Allisen), and 15 grandchildren: Ian, Emmie, Henry, Owen, James, Grace, Josh, Sadie, Talmage, Wilson, Samantha, Sawyer, Watson, Redford, and Everett. She will also be missed by her sisters Beverly Jones, Carrie Hadley, Kimberly Killian, Julie LeHew, and brother Ron Beck. She is joined now in heaven with her grandson Weston Gibby and her parents Spencer Beck and Marilyn Swenson along with other dear friends and family members.

Sylvia was born at LDS Hospital on November 18, 1944, and lived most of her life in Salt Lake City. As a five-year-old, she was bed-ridden for several months because of rheumatic fever. This illness and other challenging childhood circumstances gave her a sense of quiet courage and self confidence that helped her throughout her life. She attended East High School and the University of Utah where she obtained her bachelor’s degree. She later completed a master’s degree at Brigham Young University.

A teacher by disposition and profession, Sylvia taught school for more than 30 years in Savannah, Georgia, and Salt Lake City. Most of her career was spent at Ensign and Wasatch Elementary Schools where she taught the Extended Learning Program and helped to shape the lives of hundreds of bright and talented students. She loved teaching and tutoring and was a beloved mentor for other teachers and her students. In addition to many national awards, in 2010 she received the Huntsman Excellence in Education Award for her years of dedicated service to Utah students.

Sylvia loved to travel. Together, she and Jim visited every continent and she traveled to every state. She also loved calligraphy, watercolor painting, making Chinese food, the Twilight Series, math games, Wicked the Musical, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco, and To Kill a Mockingbird. She loved to read and to learn. More than anything, she loved her family and her faith.

Sylvia was a devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She married Jim U. Mathis in the Salt Lake Temple on August 11, 1967, and spent most of her adult life in the Thirty-Third Ward where she made many lifelong friends. An active participant in her ward family, she served in many church positions, helping to bless the lives of her neighbors. A good and faithful servant throughout her life, we know that she rests now in the loving embrace of her Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the final years of her life, she wrestled valiantly with Parkinson’s disease. Her husband Jim was her constant caregiver and companion. Even during a debilitating illness, she remained positive and optimistic, making a list of the “Benefits of Having Parkinson’s.” In every aspect of her life, she tried to strengthen others, provide good humor and common sense, and make the world a better place.

Funeral services will be held at the Thirty Third Ward, 453 South 1100 East, in Salt Lake City on Monday, January 15, 2024, at 11 am. A viewing for friends and family will be held prior to the funeral at the Thirty-Third Ward on Monday from 9:30 to 10:30 am and also on Sunday night, January 14 from 6 to 8 pm. In lieu of flowers please consider donating to the Parkinson’s Foundation www.parkinson.org.

For those unable to attend, a recording of the service will be available for 30 days. Click on the "Watch Service" button.