Georgia Josephine Bodell Peterson

April 10, 1927 ~ July 23, 2017

Georgia Josephine Bodell Peterson passed away from natural causes on July 23, 2017. She was born on April 10, 1927.

Representative Georgia Peterson served in the Utah State House of Representatives from 1969 to 1980, having won the largest percentage of votes of any legislator up to that time.She was a Republican, although both of her parents served in the legislature as Democrats.She was elected by her peers to several leadership positions during her terms.In addition to that service, she was involved in numerous volunteer positions for her community, including the PTA and her church.She made friends easily as she served, many remained close throughout her life.

While in the legislature she was a strong advocate for education and transportation.She believed providing quality public education and improving infrastructure were the catalysts to ensure economic success in the State.Also, she sponsored many bills to ensure equal protection for women, including a bill that made national headlines, ending paid toilets in public restrooms.She always refused to enter the side door of the Alta Club, as was expected by women at the time, and felt that women should be treated and paid equally to men.Much has changed since she served, and she welcomed in later years anti-discrimination measures against other groups.

Because she believed that equal protection should be handled by legislation, not constitutional changes, she opposed the equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution.She was elected Chair of the Utah Delegation to the International Women\s Year national conference in Houston, Texas, and was featured in many national publications and network news shows.She later regretted the misunderstanding among women, and kept urging that women must think for themselves and follow their dreams, whether it be professional, or raising a family, or both.At the request of the University of Utah, she has written of her experience and donated her papers, as this was a critical time in the effort to insure rights of woman throughout the world.

In 1981, she became a founding member of Research Associates, a think tank to improve politics in Utah.She was a strong advocate that the Republican Party return to its roots to focus on education, economic development, and programs that will help enterprise, in lieu of taking positions on social issues.She spoke at numerous community groups throughout the state, opposing many of the stands of the Tea Party and the ultra right movement.

To her grandchildren, Ma was a wonderful grandmother. She let them climb her trees, play with toy boats in her creek, decorate and ride bicycles up and down the lane for July 4th parades, set off fireworks, play badminton, perform plays, and use their imaginations and creativity to turn the hall closet into an elevator and to invent stories throughout the house. Despite her generosity, she never let them win at card or board games. Christmas was always a huge celebration, every single room was filled with multiple Christmas trees, and neighbors and friends came by every year for the annual Christmas open house.

On August 22, 2015, her world stood still, as the love of her life, Dr. Ted Peterson, passed away.Their love and commitment to each other were legendary. They met on a blind date and dated throughout high school, then married in the temple and were together for nearly 69 years. He was always there for her, whether as her campaign manager, her political advisor, or working together on the numerous projects in their home, which they both loved.The family\s comfort at this time comes from knowing that they are together again.

She is survived by a son, Craig E. Peterson, a daughter, Elizabeth E. Peterson, and five grandchildren, Chari Farr (Jason), Chris Evans, Jessica McKinlay (Kirk), Ted Peterson (Paige), and Jennifer Peterson, and one great grandson, Finnley Ted Peterson.She always encouraged her children and grandchildren to reach higher, learn about the world, dress appropriately (she loved high fashion clothes), and give back.Higher education was not an option, it was expected, and, to her credit, all of her grandchildren hold advanced degrees.

She was preceded in death not only by her husband but by her son Arthur Ted Peterson, her father, Milton Bodell, her mother, Elizabeth Bodell Skanchy, her brother, Arden Bodell, her sister, Dixie Bodell, and her daughter-in-law, Diana Peterson.

Funeral services will be held at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East 10600 South, on Thursday, July 27th, at 11 a.m. Interment will be at Sandy City Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, we suggest two options: First, you may elect to give to the Utah Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association in her honor.Second, find a deserving candidate for office, who represents your views, and make a donation to his/her campaign.