

Virginia Schiess Udarbe

October 24, 1933 ~ November 22, 2025

Virginia Schiess Udarbe was reunited with her eternal companion on November 22, 2025, slipping away peacefully after a short hospital stay. For 92 years she quietly wore herself out in the service of her God, her family, and her fellow men. She was born October 24, 1933, to Fredrick Oliver Schiess and Daisy Hall in their home in Providence, Utah. The oldest of five children, Virginia grew up with three sisters—Clara May Criswell, Mildred Miller, and Joan Lofthouse—and one brother, Kay Schiess.

Virginia's childhood was shaped by the rhythm and resilience of farm life. Her family raised most of their own food, and she spent hours weeding their large garden. When a hen stopped laying eggs, it quickly became dinner. Her job was plucking the feathers. Life was simple and demanding—an outhouse instead of indoor plumbing, a tin tub placed in the kitchen each Saturday night for family bath time, and an ice box that required a weekly block of ice to keep food cool. She helped chop kindling for the wood-burning stove, cleaned the house, washed and ironed clothes, and assisted her mother with making bread.

But there was joy, too. When chores were done, Virginia could be found listening to radio dramas, crocheting, or doing embroidery. She played softball in the summer and went sledding and ice skating in the winter. For many years, she and her sisters delivered newspapers each afternoon. Virginia took the bicycle while one sister rode their horse—a detail she remembered fondly. Above all, reading was her favorite pastime, a love she carried throughout her life.

A dedicated student, Virginia excelled in school and was a member of the honor club. She took shorthand and business English courses with the intent of becoming a secretary after high school. As a junior, she was chosen to read a radio script in the regional speech festival, winning the regional competition and advancing to the state festival—an accomplishment she was proud of.

After graduating, Virginia worked as a secretary for the State Engineer's Adjudication Department field office and later transferred to the State Capitol in Salt Lake City—a big move for a girl who had always dreamed of living in the city. She also worked for AT&T until her first child was born.

When Virginia moved into the South 20th Ward, she walked into the community where her future began. Clarence Carl Udarbe, who had grown up in that ward, was serving a mission in Germany at the time. When he returned in May of 1953, they met and soon began dating. Their relationship deepened quickly, but after a few months Clarence was drafted into the Korean War and sent to basic training, then deployed to Germany for 18 months. Before he left, they became engaged. They wrote letters to each other every day throughout his service.

On July 21, 1955, they were sealed for time and eternity. They had planned to be married in the Salt Lake Temple by President J. Reuben Clark—who was a member of their ward and a counselor in the Church's First

Presidency—but the Salt Lake Temple was closed that day. Instead, they were sealed in the Logan Temple with a handful of family present, followed by a simple lunch with Virginia's family before hurrying back to Salt Lake City for their reception that evening in the 20th Ward building.

From the time she moved to Salt Lake City, Virginia lived on the Avenues. After their marriage, she and Clarence remained there, first in an apartment and later in the home on 11th Avenue where they raised their family and lived for the rest of their earthly lives. They were blessed with three children: Anita Ann (Dave) Torgersen, Robert Carl, and Jennifer Marie (Trevor) Holladay. After Anita and Robert were born, they felt their family was not yet complete. Years of hope, prayer, and medical intervention ultimately brought Jennifer into their lives nine and a half years after Robert—an immeasurable joy.

Family was the center of Virginia's world. She was happiest when surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She cherished family vacations to Bear Lake and Lake Tahoe and was thrilled to visit Jerusalem with Clarence and friends, walking where the Savior walked.

Virginia was a devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She said she had always had a testimony—never remembering a time without one. She served throughout her life in numerous callings, including in Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society, where she served as Relief Society President. She also served as a Relief Society visitor at the Primary Children's Hospital Branch. Her church service brought her lifelong friendships in both the 20th Ward and later the Ensign 1st Ward.

An exceptional cook, Virginia became known for her delicious meals. Family and friends frequently asked for her recipes, and her children and grandchildren returned for decades of Sunday dinners and birthday celebrations. She loved watching cooking shows and reading cookbooks, and she taught a 4-H cooking class for neighborhood girls during Jennifer's childhood. Even when she could no longer stand at the stove, she sat at the kitchen table and directed Robert in the cooking—continuing to nurture her family in the way she knew best.

Virginia and Clarence's posterity became one of her greatest joys. She leaves behind seven beloved grandchildren and five great-grandchildren:

Chris (Mitzi) Torgersen with children Hayes, Smith, Park, and Coe;

Nikki Torgersen;

Andrew Torgersen with daughter Ella;

Amy Holladay (Kiarash Ghasemzadeh);

Ashley Holladay (Cameron Yancey);

James Holladay;

and Max Holladay.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, December 2, at 11:00 a.m. at the Ensign Stake Center, 135 A Street, Salt Lake City. A viewing will be held prior to the service at 9:30 a.m. Interment will take place at the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to a favorite charity or to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Services.