Rita Gilbert Reese

April 29, 1930 ~ May 23, 2016

Rita Gilbert Reese was born on April 29, 1930 to Clifford Frank and Florence Christine Gilbert in Salt Lake City, Utah. Rita died in the early morning hours of May 23,2016, her son Rick's birthday. She married Ralph Elmer Reese on September 19, 1952 after graduating from the University of Utah. She and Ralph are the parents of Rick, Rob (Mary Jo Laramie), and Ruth (Greg Peters). Their granddaughters are Ambra (Trim Wellbeloved) and Molly (Bill Pilivi) along with great-grandchildren; Reese, Ian, Tate Wellbeloved and Sia Pilivi. Her faithful companion, Reilly, stayed with her throughout her last days, he will miss her dearly.

Rita is preceded in death by her parents, her twin brother Ray, youngest brother Marty, son, Rick, and husband, Ralph, just eight months ago.

Rita always said she wanted only these words for her obituary: "I was born, I lived, and I died." Shortly before dying she emphasized she only wanted a boring, ordinary obituary. Well, those of you who know and love Rita, know she was anything but boring and ordinary!

Rita attended Hawthorne Elementary, Irving Jr. High, South High School, and the University of Utah. She enjoyed friendships from each of these schools throughout her life. She was proud to be a UTE and enjoyed memories of her Alpha Phi sorority days.

Rita and Ralph enjoyed an active life. During winters they skied while summers included boating, water-skiing and hiking. The five R's spent many hours on the ski slopes and lakes throughout Utah. Twenty years of Friendship Cruises, dinners and dancing and playing bridge brought a lot of laughter to their lives. Rita enjoyed bowling on various leagues, playing tennis with Jack and Kay Alder weekly for many years and golfing with just the ladies or with Ralph's insurance groups. In most recent years they followed the Red Rocks yearly to Regionals with Bob and Arita Sparks. Rita and Ralph have been members of the Crimson Club from its inception.

Rita was born with a creative and productive spirit. She was a master seamstress creating beautiful tailored suits, wedding dresses, quilts and baby clothes. It saddened her to lose her vision ending her sewing days. Christmas trees were decorated differently each year and each unique. She painted several beautiful pieces for both her Salt Lake and Bear Lake homes, as well as, cultivating exquisite landscaping at these homes. She would get our dad to clear the path and she would do the planting.

Volunteering was always an important aspect of her life. Rita and Ralph first joined the Salt Lake City Jaycees, then she went on to join the Salt Lake Council of Women, school PTA groups, volunteering with the Sheriff's bicycle safety program, involvement with The Boy Scouts of America and receiving the Silver Beaver Award for over twenty years of dedicated service, The Ladies Literacy Club, The Utah Republican Party, and in several church callings while living in the Winder West Third Ward. She cherished her ward family and dear neighbors.

She believed in conservation and environmental issues long before it was deemed necessary for our planet's future. Each of us has an appreciation of the world around us and we take the time to look at our beautiful world because of Rita. She would often sit on the deck of her cabin and say, "I wonder what my friends are doing tonight?" as she gloried in the beauty surrounding her. She loved studying and learning about EVERYTHING. And if you were lucky, she would share her knowledge with you.

It was her adamant wish that no services be held in her honor. As her great-grandson, Ian, expressed, "But what about us?" We ask that you take the time to say, "I love you" to your family and friends, everyday. If you wish to make a donation in her honor, she would want you to think of the Humane Society of Utah or The Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. She also supported anything Utah UTES, especially The Red Rocks. Think of her when you attend the symphony, ballet, or Pioneer Theater. When football/basketball seasons begin, put up your U, and cheer on her favorite team. Call your family and have them look at the beautiful sunset or full moon as she always did with us. But most of all, thank you for loving our mom, and know she loved and cherished each of you and the friendship you shared. Rita was an extraordinary woman and she was anything but boring! Do something for the greater good in honor of Rita's life well served.

Our family greatly appreciates the love and attention Gloria and her CNAs showed both of our parents. Thank you to the IHC Palliative and Hospice Care, as well as the many doctors who took great care of Rita. Drs. Jeffrey Twitchell and Jordan Schaeffer have always been genuinely kind and caring toward our mom.

Rita and Ralph wanted their ashes placed at "R" Retreat. We will honor their wishes this summer. If you want more information please contact Rob or Ruth.