Lurene Kealiilalanikulani Gates Wilkinson

September 25, 1914 ~ September 17, 2016

Lurene K. Gates Wilkinson, our beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother, and friend, slipped from this earth into the glory of God and the arms of her eternal sweetheart on Saturday, September 17, 2016, surrounded at home by her loving family.

A great-granddaughter of Brigham Young, Lurene was born in Hilo, Hawaii on September 25, 1914, daughter of Franklin Young Gates and Florence Keate Gates. Her parents were called on a mission to Hawaii,Äîduring their wedding reception,Äîby President Joseph F. Smith. Local Saints gave the young couple permission to use the royal name, Kealiilalanikulani ("Queen over queens of the Heavens") for their new baby girl.

During her happy childhood in Provo, Utah, Washington D.C., Colorado, and Salt Lake City Lurene loved nature, dancing, music, and summers with her family Brighton Canyon. As a young woman she served as secretary for her grandmother, Susa Y. Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young. Lurene graduated from East High School and the University of Utah, where she met her eternal sweetheart Harold Nephi Wilkinson. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on June 27, 1938. They are parents of Victoria Romney (Gordon), Mary Susan Burke (Romney), Harold G. Wilkinson (Brenda), and Heidi Lords (Jeff) whom they have loved unconditionally, inspired, and nurtured through the years.

Lurene taught Junior High School English, business, and speech, and was assistant personnel director and assistant in the merchandise office at ZCMI. She served as PTA President, on the Promised Valley Theater Council Board, Sigma Chi and Kappa Kappa Gamma Mothers' Club President, and was a hostess at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Office Building for 14 years. She served as Stake YW MIA President, and fulfilled many callings in the auxiliary organizations of the church.

In 1963 Lurene and two other members of the Primary General Board coined "Choose the Right," for the 6-7 year olds in Primary. They wrote the CTR manual and also suggested the CTR ring, which was set aside for a time and adopted later. With her sweetheart, Lurene served in the Eastern States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1968 to 1971. Their missionaries still remember that President Wilkinson called her his "sweet note" and that Sister Wilkinson knew all of the missionaries by name and loved them.

A born writer, Lurene was an active member and President of Pen Women International and won awards for her writing. She wrote local Roadshows and other productions that were presented in the Tabernacle and distributed Church-wide. With her sister, Florence Marie Stamm, Lurene created an engaging, original musical program on the life of Susa Y. Gates which they presented it throughout the Salt Lake valley and beyond for more than 20 years.

Lurene was innately sunny-natured, positive, and sociable. She belonged to book clubs, dinner clubs, lunch clubs, study groups, and the church choir. When Harold was President of International Visitors Lurene served as a

Trustee and frequent hostess. In that and other contexts she gave elegant dinners with china, crystal, and gourmet food as well as rollicking parties and innumerable wedding showers (including custom poetry for the brides),Äîall with no sign of fluster or stress. And she performed an enchanting Hula at her own 100th Birthday party in 2014.

Throughout her long life, Lurene's greatest loves and first priorities were the Gospel of Jesus Christ and her family. She nurtured them, helped with their studies, supported their activities, welcomed their friends, and sewed wonderful clothes for her daughters (and even their dolls for magical Christmas mornings).

Lurene's 26 grandchildren, 70 great-grandchildren, the three on the way from Heaven, and her one great-great-granddaughter and will remember their "Mama Rene" or "Mina's" interest, encouragement, radiant smile, and her shining, joyful testimony of the Gospel. Throughout the years her lasting lessons of faith, optimism, compassion, virtue, integrity and love will live on in her family. We have watched Lurene live these lessons every day of our lives.

Preceding Lurene in death are her husband Harold, her parents, her siblings Frank, James, Jacob, Mark, David, and Florence Marie. She is survived by her children, their spouses, and their posterity.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, September 27 at 10:30 am in the Monument Park Stake Center, 1320 Wasatch Drive in Salt Lake City, Utah. Viewings will be from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Monday, September 26 at Larkin Sunset Mortuary, 2350 East 1300 South, and from 9:00 to 10:00 am prior to the funeral service at the Stake Center.