

Yvonne Ruth Larsen

November 2, 1936 ~ October 25, 2020

Yvonne Ruth Burns Larsen passed away on Sunday, October 25th, 2020. She was born November 2, 1936, in Salt Lake City to Ezna (Thompson) and Kenneth Burns. She had two beloved sisters, Norma Fay (Nunley) and Renee (Mangelson), and two cherished brothers, Fred, and Darryl (Jeanette). She attended Granite High School. After graduating she worked for the Lockhart Company, traveled, and Married Loren Croft Larsen (Whitey). She later married Claron Welte and became stepmother to Mike, Gary, and Rick Welte. She had six children, two of whom were given up for adoption as infants including Kitty Mortimer. She had four boys with Whitey: Todd (Gail), Ty (Beverly), Tim, and Michael (Tracy). She is preceded in death by her mother, father, brothers, sisters, and ex-husbands.

She adored and spoiled her nine grandchildren (Jason, Erik, Holland, Jamie, Jessica, Loren Alexander, Cortney, Luke, and Ada) and six great-grandchildren (Jaxson, Aspynn, Brightynn, Wyatt, Creedon, and Kylee). She treasured her relationship with her daughter, Kitty, her husband Doyle, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Anna and Matt Greene (2 children), Suzy and Shane Baller (4 children), Dan and McKell Mortimer (4 children), Julie and Jake Suazo (4 children), Carrie Mortimer (2 children), Sarah Mortimer, Joseph Mortimer.

As a young woman, she faced enormous challenges: giving up children for adoption, divorces, being a single mom, but she NEVER complained or let those things get her down. She truly put others before herself. For years, she cheerfully held down two jobs to support her family and finance the fun. She worked very hard and played harder, always running at full power. After working all day at Cottonwood High School as the attendance secretary, she would come home, make dinner, take a 20-minute nap, and then go off to the night shift at Smith's grocery store as a checker. Customers would seek out her line so they could chat with her for a few minutes. She would often finish work at midnight, take a bath with a warm Natural Light beer, and one cigarette to relax before getting up and doing it all again the next day.

Her proudest accomplishment was her four boys. Despite being a single mom and on a tight budget, she always made holidays memorable and special and always took a vacation somewhere. She was the instigator of frequent family get-togethers and parties. Any excuse to get the family together was good enough. Funeral Potatoes, Raspberry-Rufus-Hair-Pie, Torture Beans, Blueberry Cream Cheese Pie were some of her favorite dishes. Camping was a full-contact sport -the colder the better.

Yvonne loved to travel. She took several trips to Europe as well as Mexico, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Schiemanns of Hamburg, Germany were her “German Family”, and the entire Larsen family has enjoyed that friendship for 40 years.

Her favorite recreation and therapy was working in her yard in Cottonwood Heights. She was famous for her gorgeous roses, poppies, iris, and lilacs. She grew raspberries, apricots, and cherries. You could often find her sitting in her yard on a bucket digging out China Rocks for hours and chatting with neighbors as they passed by.

Yvonne loved her dogs Max and especially Rufus, the black lab mix. She never really cared for cats.

Yvonne had an impish irreverence. She was kooky, and fun and fierce, relentless, and giving. Humor was everything and it is an enduring family legacy which she nurtured and cherished. She was just a likely to be photographed giving “the finger” to the camera as cuddling one of her grandchildren. She famously and intentionally wore a curler in her hair in public, often just to keep people guessing.

Nobody could tell a more rambling disconnected story. Plot meant nothing to her when telling a story. It was always about the “characters”, the people, the relationships. She had an uncanny memory for everyone she met and their stories. When picking her up at the airport, it was never just her that you’d greet at the gate, it was also the new friend she had made in the seat next to her. Relationship, connection, empathy, open-ness defined Yvonne.

She was constantly taking pictures and building elaborate photo albums, meticulously documenting every holiday, get-together, football game, art opening, or music performance. Funerals, illnesses, car accidents were all fair game for photography. She captured life in all its aspects.

She was a giver. She gave herself to her boys. She gave her time and attention to anyone in need. A fanatical gift-giver, she searched for reasons to give. When she couldn’t find one, she created reasons to give. Thinking Santa Clause wasn’t quite enough, she developed the character Ernest the Elf so that she could give even more throughout the holiday season. She became The May Fairy on May 1 in order to give gifts and let people know she was thinking about them. No one ever left her home hungry or feeling unloved. She was generous to a fault and the first to forgive any transgression.

Her family was her life and inspiration. Those of us lucky enough to be within her orbit will feel the enormous vacuum Yvonne Larsen will leave in this world. We will honor and love her forever. Light and Peace to you Yvonne.

In lieu of flowers, or if you want to safely honor Yvonne remotely, please donate in her name to the American Cancer Society.
https://donate3.cancer.org/?giftType=hon&giftTypeMonthlyDisplay=0&_ga=2.202535512.871366176.1603794049-114572

On behalf of Yvonne and the family, we would like to recognize with special appreciation and eternal gratitude her great-niece Ashley Nielson-Wilcox for her tireless advocacy and day in, day out medical care of our mom over the last couple of years. Ashley's devotion is a reflection of and tribute to Yvonne’s spirit of giving and dedication to family and human connection. Thanks, Ash.

A graveside service will take place on Friday, October 30, 2020, at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road, Sandy, Utah at 2:00 pm. Strict Covid19 protocols will be followed. Social distancing and masks required. Please bring your own chair.