

Tribute to Marjorie C. Stucki

Given by Kimberly S. Robison

We would like to thank all of you who have come from near and far to celebrate the extraordinary life of our mother – Marjorie Curtis Stucki. Especially mom’s sister Aunt Geri – mom would be so honored to have you here. As I was preparing for today, I kept asking myself, how could I possibly sum up my mother’s 90 amazing years in 8 minutes? It’s impossible, so I’m going to hit the highlights and hope that it does justice to this extraordinary woman, sister, wife, mother and grandmother.

History –

Our mother was born to Arnold and Myrtle Curtis on April 27, 1929. She was their second child and was affectionately nicknamed “Farina” by her father after an African American child movie star because her skin was darker than her sister’s. Our mother’s childhood was filled with love and family. Her family didn’t have much, but they were happy. Mom’s childhood and teenage years were remarkably like our own. . . she had a best friend, spent hours playing in their playhouse built from wood refrigerator boxes, loved dolls and dollhouses, got teased and called “Magpie” by kids at school, did chores, helped with spring cleaning, underwent peer pressure for what she wore or didn’t wear, and loved to go camping with her family at Mirror Lake.

When mom was in 6th grade there was an assembly where it was announced which kids would get to have an assignment for the next school year. All the assignments were announced except for the most prestigious one – the bell ringer. Mom hadn’t been named for any of the jobs and she felt sick that she wouldn’t be called to do anything. Finally, the bell ringer’s name was announced, and it was Mom! She was so happy and said that this was the first time she ever thought she could be someone important.

From childhood, our mother loved sports. She would play baseball and other games in the lot behind their house—but she liked baseball best because her dad played baseball. She liked bicycling and hiking, but she LOVED skiing most of all. Sometimes she got to go skiing with her sister Geri and Geri’s friends at Brighton – one of them called mom “The Blue Streak” as she skied down the slopes in her blue parka. To the very end our mother loved to watch sports – volleyball, football and basketball. The Jazz never knew what a fan they had in Mom.

Mom paid her own way to attend the University of Utah. Grandpa Curtis said he would pay for his boys to go to college because they would have to make a living, but if the girls wanted to go, they would need to pay their own way. Mom’s brothers never went to a single day of college, but all three girls went. Mom paid her way through college working various jobs including nannying and dental assisting for her aunt & uncle in Canada, working as a maid/waitress at the Grand Canyon one summer and then painting ceramics for piece rate. Our mom was the first one to graduate from college – she earned a degree in Home Economics . . . and boy did she use it raising us kids!!!!

Mom met dad at a Lambda Delta Sigma roller skating party just days after her “missionary”, Dave Hinckley, returned home from his mission. Dave didn’t call mom for a few days which

made her mad, so to get back at him, she went out with other people. That's when she met dad. And how happy we are that she did! Margie married William Richard Stucki for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake City temple on July 30, 1951. Their posterity now includes 8 children, 41 grandchildren and 52 great grandchildren.

Home beautification

Mom had a special talent for home beautification that started with a project she had to do at the University while she was still living at home. Her and her dad designed and remodeled the kitchen adding extra shelves, hooks, storage space and seating. She painted and wallpapered and upholstered a row of seats her dad made. When the project was complete, Dr. Virginia Cutler, whom my mom loved, came to her house to grade it. Mom got an A of course.

Her drive to beautify her surroundings continued throughout her life – room after room, home after home, business after business – mom was driven to make everything as beautiful as humanly possible.

Cooking, baking –

Our mother was renowned for her great cooking and baking. She could make anything and believed in real, pure ingredients. She had a knack for making something delicious seemingly from nothing at times.

Mom's cooking and baking talents expanded to Sunflower Hill Bakery, Sunflower Hill Pantry, and finally Sunflower Hill Bed & Breakfast. All who ate at these establishments were lucky. One of mom's favorite stories is when Steven Spielberg came and ate lunch at the Pantry one afternoon while filming a movie in Moab. After eating, he came and told mom and dad that that was the best clam chowder he had ever had!!! Later that afternoon mom found the strainer of clams on the counter --- she forgot to put them in!!!!

Indominable Spirit

Our mother had an indominable spirit. No task was ever too big for my mom to fearlessly tackle. Whether that meant building a homestead out of 10 acres of unimproved land, tearing out a wall that was just in the wrong place, starting numerous businesses to help the family get by, digging out a basement bucket by bucket. None of these scared her. Mom was a DREAMER with the courage, determination, and persistence to overcome all obstacles in order to reach her dreams; indeed, if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, she sought after these things—and she wouldn't stop until she got them!

Mom's determined spirit gene passed down to many of us in spades—along with her beautiful big toothy Curtis smile and her perfectionism. Yet, we have come to realize that stubbornly holding on to a vision, loving people who don't always deserve it, and enduring pain and challenges and never giving up is truly one of the best qualities in the world and a lesson our mother taught us by example.

Mom also taught us to be polite and proper; we were expected to be gentleman and ladies. To the very end, with both shoulders broken and unable to lift her arms, she would try to raise her hand to cover her mouth when she coughed or to wipe a crumb of food from her lips.

Mom truly was a force of nature.

What She Loved Most

Our mother loved the color blue and was drawn to it whenever she bought anything. Maybe that was because she had remarkable blue eyes that twinkled when she was happy.

She loved chocolate and nuts – Baby Ruth’s were her favorite candy bar because of all the nuts and Burnt Almond Fudge was her favorite ice cream.

She loved playing ROOK and could beat us all right up until the last few years.

Our mother loved her roots – her mother, her dad, her Grandma Ammot, her aunt Eleanor, Grandma Sorenson and so many others. As mom got older and especially in the last few days before she left this world, she knew they were waiting for her.

Mom loved to have fun! She made the ordinary extraordinary. Road day trips with a basket full of bread, cheese and cookies. Trips to Grand Junction where even though we couldn’t afford it, we’d get a Wendy’s Frosty. We’d work super hard but then she’d read us books – Summer of the Monkey’s, Sugar Blues, Anne of Green Gables, and House of Many Rooms. Mom loved to make us treats, desserts, and delicious food. Christmas was filled with caramel popcorn balls, peanut brittle and the best holiday meals you can imagine.

Our mother loved flowers and nature. When I was growing up, I remembered my mother’s favorite song was the one Olivia sang today “My Heavenly Father Loves Me” . . . mom LOVED this song as it testified of all the beauty around us. My mother loved David Austen roses, lilacs, and all things beautiful. She researched and sought out the best varieties of fruits, vegetables, flowers and trees as it wasn’t worth planting if it wasn’t magnificent.

Most of all, our mother loved her family with all her heart and would do anything for us – she was the anchor, always there when we needed her, always helping to make our dreams come true. When we hurt, she hurt. When we were happy, she was happy. When we were sad, she was sad. It must have been exhausting to be our mother . . . but I think she loved every minute of it. Mom always used to say we made a pact in heaven to help one another when we came to earth. I know there were times when we helped her get through her trials and challenges, but the truth of the matter is that so much of who we are - what kind of people we are - comes from our mother.

On October 23rd, with body nearly completely worn out and broken, and 90 years of love, service, sacrifice, and enduring, heaven could keep its gates shut no longer, and our mother was reunited with her eternal companion to continue her work on our behalf on the other side. When angels and miracles come your way during your life, make no mistake dear family, who is extending her love and influence upon you from heaven—It is Mom!