



LEILA PORTER SAUNDERS 1922- 2016

Leila Porter was born in Ogden, Utah, 7 March 1922, to Lois Rogers and Willard Warriner Porter. She was the first of their six children. She was raised in Ogden, but spent many happy summers with her maternal grandparents in Blanding, Utah. Her family was altered drastically when her three month old sister, Kathleen, died due to whooping cough in 1929. Her remaining siblings included Kenneth, Lloyd, Virginia, and Beverly.

Growing up during the Great Depression held many challenges for the Porter family. Her mother was employed outside the home for most of her life, and they often lived with relatives. Leila's father held a variety of jobs, even joining a traveling carnival at one time. He was very talented musically and had perfect pitch. He played an interesting assortment of instruments including the violin, cow bells, a saw with a violin box, the harmonica (he could play two at the same time!) and the piano. Leila's musical talent was apparent at an early age. She excelled on the piano, the accordion, and also had a beautiful singing voice. She attended Lincoln Elementary, Mound Fort Junior High, and Ogden High School. Her musical prowess allowed her to be involved with many school activities.

Her first job, at sixteen years of age, was doing housework for \$5 a day. She felt wealthy when she was hired as an elevator operator for \$60 a month. When she was nineteen she began working at Hill air Force Base in the Signal Section as a posting clerk making \$150 a month. It was while working this job in June 1942 that she met Leland Ray Saunders, a handsome young man with beautiful blue eyes. Even though she was engaged to someone else at the time, their feelings for each other could not be denied. She soon broke off her engagement and an eternal love began to develop. World War II was raging and most courtships were necessarily short. Theirs was no exception. They became engaged in October and were married in the Salt Lake LDS Temple on 6 November 1942. Leland celebrated his 20th birthday nine days after their marriage, and received his draft notice shortly thereafter. He decided to join the Navy for his military commitment. After a six month deferment, he left for boot camp in Farragut, Idaho. Leila was pregnant with their first child and moved in with her parents while Leland was away. He was stationed in Bryan, Texas, when the first of their 10 children, a daughter Marilyn, was born 14 November 1943. Leila took her first train trip when she and her five week old daughter joined Lee in Texas just before Christmas. They were transferred to Corpus Christi, Texas, and then to Alameda Naval Air Station in California. They lived in California until the war ended in 1946, and Lee was discharged from the Navy.

The little family returned to Utah, vowing never to leave the “valley of the “mountains” again. Leila was pregnant with their second child when they returned to Ogden and they lived in an apartment attached to Leland’s parents’ house. Janet was born 17 June 1946. Shortly after her birth, they moved into a duplex at 2763 Monroe boulevard. Lee’s brother Lawrence and his wife Alice lived in the other part of the duplex. They lived there for three years until their third daughter, Joy, was born, 30 March 1949. They had outgrown their three-room duplex home so they moved just around the block to 628 28th Street. They were active members of the LDS Church and Leland was serving in the Elders Quorum Presidency so they were happy to find a home that left them in the Ogden 18th Ward. He was soon called as a counselor in the bishopric. Leila served as ward and primary organist and as 1st counselor in the Primary presidency.

The family continued to grow with their first son, Kevin, who was an April Fools’ Day surprise, since he was born on 1 April 1952. Gary came soon after on 3 July 1953. Edward joined the family 10 July 1955, and when Ronald was born 25 July 1957, they knew it was time to look for a larger home. They looked at many different locations, mostly nor of Ogden in rural areas. They explored the pioneer home site of Leland’s uncle, William Gill Saunders, in the small town of Harrisville. The property consisted of 14 acres and was a full working farm. The home was original to the site but an addition had been built on to add modern conveniences, a kitchen and indoor bathroom! This was to be their home for the next few years as their dream house was being built just to the east. The hope for another daughter was fulfilled 19 May 1960 with Lori’s birth. They moved into the new home when she was one year old. Roger followed 27 May 1962, and the family was complete with the birth of their tenth child, Alan, 4 Jun 1964.

Leila had her hands full with the care of her large family. Leland was busy serving as the first mayor of Harrisville and in many demanding church callings. She also served in many callings including the primary presidency and as Relief Society president, while in addition, always sharing her musical talent as ward organist or back up. She was consistently a great support to Leland as well, and contributed to the support of the family by giving piano lessons for many years. All of the children were involved in sports and school programs, and both parents were dedicated to supporting their various activities. It was a great challenge, but each child felt the love and encouragement of their parents.

Leila and Leland have always been deeply committed to the LDS church, and all six sons serve on two-year missions. In 1990, it was their turn to serve as missionaries, and they were called to serve in the Brisbane, Australia mission. For 18 months they traveled throughout the mission boundaries with Leland giving patriarchal blessings to over 100 members who would not have had the opportunity otherwise. Leila served as scribe and typist for each blessing. Their joint efforts will be remembered for many generations.

In 2012, Leila and Leland were in their 90th year and celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Their love story was a true example of devotion and service to all who knew them. They still lived in the red brick dream home they designed and built together from 1959 through 1961 (830

North Harrisville Road). Their posterity included 10 children, 52 grandchildren, and 94 great grandchildren.

Leila Porter Saunders died 31 August 2016, in Harrisville, Utah, and she is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

SOURCES:

Wiese, Joy Saunders. "Information about Leila Porter Saunders." 2011.

Obituary of Leila Saunders. Standard Examiner. Ogden, Weber, Utah. 4 September 2016.

Porter, Beverly	Saunders, Gary
Porter, Kathleen	Saunders, Janet
Porter, Kenneth	Saunders, Joy
Porter, Lloyd	Saunders, Kevin
Porter, Lois Rogers	Saunders, Leland Ray
Porter, Virginia	Saunders, Lori
Porter, Willard Warriner	Saunders, Marilyn
Rogers, Lois	Saunders, Roger
Saunders, Alan	Saunders, William Gill
Saunders, Edward	