



Jayne Elvena Robertson Stewart

JAN 6, 1928 - DEC 4, 2013



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FLORAL HAVEN

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Jayne Elvena Robertson Stewart January 6, 1928 – December 4, 2013 Jayne Elvena Robertson, a talented artist and Corpus Christi resident, has followed her beloved husband Harold in death just three weeks after his passing. She battled cancer for several years, fighting valiantly to stay by Harold's side through his own terminal illness. Jayne Robertson was born on the Twelfth Day of Christmas in 1928 at Kulp Memorial Hospital in Garkida, Nigeria, West Africa. She was the first born to two remarkable Church of the Brethren medical missionaries, who preached the gospel to the natives and co-founded the Garkida Agricultural-Industrial Leprosy Colony in the late 1920s. Her parents were Dr. Russell L. Robertson and nurse Bertha Cecil Robertson. Her brother, Jack Cecil Robertson, was born three years later. Jayne's early years were colorful, with her parents educating and caring for the physical and spiritual needs of the leper colony, establishing the Garkida Leprosy Hospital in 1929, and mothering the children orphaned from leprosy. Jayne's playmates were African children, and she and her family lived in a large mud hut with a grass roof. There was no electricity, the rustic washing machine had a wringer, and clothes were hung on the line to dry. When Jayne was just four, before her family could board a ship back to the States for a sabbatical, tragedy struck as her father contracted yellow fever and died in Lagos. Sorrowfully, her widowed mother gathered their two small children, and they endured a long Atlantic voyage back to the States. This possibly explains Jayne's lifelong aversion to even the smell of fish. Her mother settled the family in Chicago, and they lived a spartan life in one- or two- bedroom apartments while Bertha attended college. Jayne initially found life in the United States to be challenging, given her exotic beginnings. She told the family stories about attending the original King Kong movie in 1933, at the tender age of six, and fleeing from the theatre when she was unable to understand that the giant ape roaring on the screen was not real. Starting grade school must have been another challenge in the



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beginning, but Jayne was an excellent and gifted student and quickly adapted. From as early as Jayne can remember, she was fascinated with the idea of boy/girl twins. A favorite were the Jane Arden paper dolls from the Sunday newspapers, Robert and Roberta. She even dreamed of the day when she would have her own set of boy/girl twins. She also enjoyed card games and jacks and was a fierce baseball player. At home, she enjoyed radio shows such as “The Lone Ranger”, “Inner Sanctum,” and soap operas. And she read books every chance she got. Jayne recalled that her favorite childhood birthday was her 12th, and her favorite gifts that year were three Shirley Temple dresses. This happy event occurred when Bertha and her family lived with her brother and his wife, Lawrence and Jenny Cecil, and Jayne bonded with her cousin Patti Cecil. She remained very close to Patti Cecil Welch for the rest of her life. Their children were similar in ages, and many family vacations were spent in visits to each other. When Jayne was 12, the Robertsons moved to Tulsa. The family joined College Hill Presbyterian Church; Jayne attended several junior highs and eventually Tulsa Central High school. She joined the school baseball team, and she excelled at spelling, reading, shorthand, and art. Jayne met her beloved husband, Harold LeRoy Stewart, when they were both in a Christmas play at College Hill. Harold began to court Jayne just a few months later. He was 17, and she just 14, but they were serious from the start. On their first date he brought her a proper corsage and then escorted her to a play at his high school. Memorable dates often included a 10 cent movie, preferably at their favorite Plaza Theatre, followed by ice cream at Hawk’s Ice cream on 11th Street. She and Harold lived in the Tulsa area another sixty years before retiring to a favorite vacation locale, Corpus Christi, Texas; both for the warm climate and to spend more time with children and grandchildren who had relocated there before her. Jayne accepted Harold’s sweet proposal of marriage on her front porch swing on June 10th, 1943, when she was 15, and they were married at May 27th, 1945, at College Hill Presbyterian Church in Tulsa, OK, just two days after Jayne’s high school graduation. Fifty years later, their large extended family would gather at that same church to celebrate their union of half a century. Their marriage would go on to last over 68 years, only ending with Harold’s death. Harold and Jayne soon started to fulfill their wish for children of their own by starting off with a bang, as twins



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Harold Wayne and Carole Jayne joined their family in 1947. Jayne was thrilled to fulfill her childhood dream – boy/girl twins of her own – and loved to recount how happy she was the day they were born! Their family was joyfully expanded in 1951 by the arrival of another son, Russell Joseph. Russell was quickly followed by the big finale: Kathy Joan and Patsy Jean, the second set of twins, born in 1952. Jayne loved having two sets of twins, and the wonderful and funny bonus son born in the middle. All of her children gave them grandchildren, and then great-grandchildren followed. At last count, Harold and Jayne’s progeny includes 5 children, 13 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and counting, and 1 great-great-grandchild with another on the way, plus numerous spouses and friendly exes. Her family reunions were both interesting and lively. One of Jayne’s defining passions was her love for children, especially babies. Perhaps she picked up this passion from her mother Bertha, who so tenderly cared for the orphaned babies and children in the leper colony. Jayne was a working mother almost from the start. Besides raising five children of her own, she had a home day care for years, where she provided love and guidance to every child as if they were her own. She spent most Sundays working in the church nurseries, preferably in the infant room. Between her own children and grandchildren and the many other children she cared for, she had a lasting and positive influence on literally hundreds of children. If you were raised by Jayne, or even married or born into her family, you learned by her example at an early age to love board games, puzzles, and especially domino and card games. Favorite card games included Hearts, Spades, Tripoly, I Doubt It, Shanghai Rummy, and Uno. You also would have picked up on her lifelong love of books. From teaching her own children to read before they entered school, to delighting in reading to the grandchildren, and then to reading books herself when she could find the time, books played a big part in her life. She had designed her last house in Tulsa to have a large floor-to-ceiling built in bookcase, stuffed to the brim with a wide variety of literature. Jayne even wrote a book of her own one year, a charming story about a beautiful blue parakeet, Elizabeth, that she had rescued from outdoors. Jayne treasured time in the outdoors, from sandy Texas sea shores to woodsy Oklahoma parks to Colorado Mountains. She was especially fond of basking in the sun. Jayne was convinced that if she just tried



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hard enough, the tan would fill in the gaps between her freckles. To her family's relief, her fair skin failed to tan, and she retained her beautiful freckles and golden red hair. Another defining trait of Jayne's was her artistic talents. It seemed there was no medium she couldn't conquer. She was a talented and award winning artist in oils. She painted many gorgeous landscapes and one year thrilled the family by painting portraits of each of her grandchildren. Up until the last year, Jayne painted beautiful keepsake Christmas ornaments for everyone in her family. She gifted all her loved ones with her creations, and they all display them proudly in their homes. She could take the simplest article, such as a sand dollar, or a saw, or a Cypress root, and turn it into a work of art. She seemed to conquer every artistic technique possible. She learned to knit and crochet, and every newborn baby in her family received a beautiful handmade crocheted afghan upon their birth. She refinished and reupholstered her furniture; she sewed most of the family clothing, as well as their bedspreads, curtains and other linens. She could embroider, needlepoint, and created some memorable rug hooking pieces. Jayne also worked outside the home as well as working from home. Early in her marriage she worked as a nurse's aide at Hillcrest Hospital in Tulsa. She operated her own home daycare center for many years, allowing her to remain at home with her own children. After she moved to Broken Arrow, she worked in the neighborhood school library, instilling in even more children her great love of books. In Broken Arrow, Jayne combined her creative flair in many mediums with Harold's love of wood working to form the "Honey Do" craft business. They produced many beautiful creations that they sold from their home and gifted to family and friends. Their popular natural plaques, composed of either sea shells, sand dollars, and starfish they collected on beach vacations, or nuts, seed pods, wild flowers, and pine cones from camping trips, were featured in a July 19th, 1968, Tulsa Daily World newspaper article and photo. As young parents Jayne and Harold were avid square dancers, and the children loved to tease them about the ruffled dancing costumes hanging in their parents' closets. She and Harold were active in the Volksmarching sport and accumulated numerous medals from walks in Oklahoma and surrounding states. Jayne was an avid walker, and most days she was up at the crack of dawn to take her daily walk. She could



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speed walk before the term was even coined, and no one in the family could keep up with her, even after she was well into her 70s. She was willing to slow down a little to accommodate her family when they wanted to join her, but they could tell she was itching to pick up the pace. Harold and Jayne had a long and commendable history of volunteering for favorite organizations and charities. Some of the most significant included The Heifer Project, Tulsa's Spotlight Theatre Saturday showings of *The Drunkard*, *Broken Arrow Neighbors*, and in Corpus Christi, the Texas State Aquarium, Chamber of Commerce, Robstown Wesley Community Center and Wesley House, and Timmons' Ministry. For years Jayne was a den mother for her sons and a Camp Fire leader for her daughters. Many churches benefited from Jayne's active membership over the years, and religion played a huge part in her daily life. From College Hill Presbyterian Church where she met and married Harold, to John Calvin Presbyterian Church where she opened up their home for services in the early days, to a long history with First Methodist of Broken Arrow, and several Methodist churches in Corpus Christi. Many of Jayne's dearest friends were discovered through their active church lives, which included activities like membership in the women's groups, teaching Sunday school, and volunteering in the nurseries. She also enjoyed close personal relationships with several church pastors and their families, and she and Harold were happy to sponsor the singles group at Broken Arrow First United Methodist Church in the 1980s. Jayne loved music, and she had eclectic tastes. She loved the classics, Elvis Presley, church hymns, oldies, and soft rock. She taught all her children to play the piano, and then watched proudly as each of them went on to play in school bands and orchestras. To her delight, her husband Harold had a glorious bass voice that she loved to hear. He was a strong voice in many church choirs over the years, and she never missed a chance to catch one of his beautiful solos. In later years, he and Jayne became very fond of the song "You Are My Sunshine". This tender song became very important to the couple in Harold's last few months, when Harold was slowly slipping away from dementia but would perk up whenever his family and friends would start the melody. Especially touching were the end times when Jayne would sing the lyrics just for Harold, as he was no longer able to sing with her or to her. This song was included in



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her last words of love and promise to Harold upon his death. Jayne's children and grandchildren looked up to her as an incredible role model. From her inspiring and life-long dedication to Harold and their marriage, to her tender and affectionate love for children, she set the standards for how to achieve a successful and loving marriage. Her energy levels were amazing, where in spite of raising so many children, she kept a spotless house and even made it look deceptively easy. She had exceptional organizational skills, and she was dependable and loyal. She once gave her family the following advice: "Be yourself – and let your conscience be your guide, as you walk through life with the Lord at your side". Her legacy of faith, love and devotion will never be forgotten by the family that adored her and misses her so much. After Harold's diagnosis of dementia, the two of them planned for their final years together. Jayne then received her own tragic diagnosis of cancer. For four years she valiantly fought back, going through several grueling radiation/chemotherapy treatments and watching the loss of her beautiful hair, then was delighted as it grew back lush and curly. She reached the point where the treatments were doing more harm than good, and it was time for a difficult choice. She put her own health concerns aside to concentrate on keeping her promise to stay by Harold's side. They had moved by then into first independent, followed by assisted living. Many close friendships and relationships were formed among the other residents and staff, who were touched by their devotion to each other. Earlier this year, Harold's dementia progressed to a point where even Jayne's care and devotion wasn't enough, and the two of them moved to Homewood Residences, with Harold settling into the Claire Bridge Care Unit, and Jayne into assisted living in the next building. Jayne spent her days at Harold's side, and they found joy in activities such as the pianist on Musical Wednesdays and visits from their Corpus Christi family. The rest of the family frequently visited and called to express their love. For the first time in Harold and Jayne's long marriage, they said goodnight and then slept apart. It was a difficult adjustment for the entire family. Jayne was preceded in death by her beloved husband Harold LeRoy Stewart. She is survived by her caring brother Jack Robertson and wife Cathy, cousin Patti Cecil Welch, son Harold and wife Carol, daughter Carole Jayne, son Russell and wife Millie, daughter Kathy Hanoch and husband Cliff, and



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daughter Patsy, as well as many adored grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren, whose numbers increase every year and brought her so much happiness and laughter. In the true spirit of giving, Jayne's final wishes included a whole body donation to science. Once every possible benefit has been realized from this unselfish gift, Jayne's ashes will be interred at Floral Haven Cemetery in Tulsa, Oklahoma, next to her late husband Harold. A private memorial service for the family was held in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Stewart family would like to recognize the caring staff at Garden Estates, Homewood Residencies and Legacy Hospice, who provided love and humor as well as medical skills. Donations in Jayne's honor can be made to the charity of your choice.



Tribute Wall

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CA

Carole posted:

Mother – it has now been almost two months and I still miss you constantly. An alarm goes off every evening at 6:15 cause that was our special time to talk. And each weekend morning, while my kids were still sleeping, I knew I could always go see you cause I knew you would be up too. I see a family picture posted on Facebook and I want to download it and share it with you. Something funny or serious happens, and I think to myself I've got to remember to tell Mother. Your birthday came and went. Harold and Carol tell me you and Daddy are now totally completely joined together – for infinity. Love you to the moon and back. Love, hugs and kisses to both you and Daddy.

January 27 at 8:25 AM

PJ

Patsy Johnston posted:

Jayne was one of my very best friends. We don't have a long, long history of friendship and I wish we did. Just a few years, but I cherish those years. It was a privilege to know such a kind, loving, generous, interesting and caring lady. I miss her so much.

December 18 at 11:33 AM

DY

Debbie Yeakey posted:

So many wonderful memories, again, as on Uncle Harold's Tribute Wall, the camping trips, the times spent just "being family together"! Aunt Jayne was an inspiration for me of how to mother a big family. She was fun, creative and adventurous. Some of my fondest memories include the walks through communities near camping areas and noticing interesting houses. Aunt Jayne would say "Let's go see if they will show us their place" and would walk up and graciously ask. The home owners were more than willing to give us tours! She was a great example of making fun in any situation and of showing hospitality to those around her. What a beautiful legacy she and Uncle Harold leave! Love you Aunt Jayne, Debbie

December 11 at 2:48 PM

CS

Cassie Stewart posted:

Grandmother was the strongest woman I've ever known. So incredibly loving and giving and loved spending time with her grandchildren. She always had interesting things to teach us, especially with little sea creatures! Her and Grandad together were perfect, two of the most kind-hearted people you would ever meet and great role models. They were absolutely adored by everyone who crossed their path. I miss you two so much!!! Love you Grandmother and Grandad! XOXO

December 11 at 5:52 AM



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BM

Betty Jane Mitchell posted:

Among my dearest memories of childhood are those times my "new aunt" Jayne spent with me doing things like playing jacks and I have a picture of us "sun tanning" on a blanket in the front yard of their first home. She made a very timid niece feel very special. She was a very "special" aunt and person. Love you Aunt Jaynie, Betty Jane

December 10 at 6:33 AM

RS

Russell Stewart posted:

Our momma was the most beautiful, loving and caring person I have ever known. How God blessed us with such a mother is the greatest gift that has been bestowed on me. Momma you will be missed every day and I am so glad that "YOU ARE THE ONLY MOTHER I WILL EVER HAVE." :Love you momma. Russell

December 7 at 11:03 AM

PS

Patsy Stewart posted:

Mother, your dedication and devotion to Daddy, whom you love so much, never wavered. In spite of your own cancer diagnosis, you always put him and his health concerns first. Your day revolved around him, and you spent as much time with him as possible. You were inseparable, even at the end. We knew how much you looked forward to joining him in Heaven, we just didn't imagine you would spend less than 3 weeks with us after he passed. The two of you taught my daughters and so many others what to expect in a loving marriage. You were true partners, each selflessly giving and receiving, and your love endured for 68 precious years. Now, you are together again, for infinity. I love and miss both of you so much, you were the best parents ever. Patsy Jean

December 7 at 9:58 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jayne by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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