

Olene S. Walker
1930-2015

Olene Smith Walker our beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, passed away from natural causes on November 28, 2015. Born in Ogden, Utah on November 15, 1930 to Thomas Ole Smith and Nina Hadley, she was the second of five children. Olene graduated from Weber High School and earned her bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Brigham Young University, Stanford University and the University of Utah, respectively. She married her sweetheart, Myron Walker, in the Salt Lake Temple on March 25, 1954 and together they raised seven children.

Olene loved life and all that it had to offer. She was humble, gracious and kind in every endeavor. Olene dedicated her time to serving her family, church and community. She served in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in many capacities, including Primary President; Young Women's President; Gospel Doctrine and Relief Society teacher; Scout leader and as a Public Relations missionary with her husband in New York City.

A trailblazer in Utah politics, Olene was a statesman who led with compassion, grace and humor. She served in the Utah House of Representatives from 1981-1989, including one term as majority whip. Olene shepherded dozens of bills to passage, but few would have more lasting impact than the creation of Utah's Rainy Day Fund.

She served as Utah's first woman lieutenant governor (1993-2003) with Governor Michael O. Leavitt, and spearheaded many important initiatives including education programs, budget security measures, healthcare reform and workforce development. Olene played a critical role in establishing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), ensuring affordable healthcare for Utah's children. She also served as Chair of the Workforce Task Force, resulting in the development of the Utah Department of Workforce Services. She chaired the National Conference of Lieutenant Governors and was the first lieutenant governor ever to serve as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State.

As Utah's 15th and first woman governor, Olene was focused on improving housing, education, health care and community development. She was passionate about education, continually fighting for the funding of a nurturing environment for all Utah's students. Utah's housing fund bears her name, the Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund. She also led efforts to propose comprehensive reform of Utah's tax code.

Continuing her legacy, she created the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service at Weber State University in 2012 to help foster community and public service.

Olene earned numerous honors during her lifetime, including Utah's YWCA Mary Schubach McCarthey Lifetime Achievement Award, the WSU Emeriti Lifetime Achievement for Setting New Standards and an honorary degree, the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce ATHENA International Award, and the *Salt Lake Tribune's* 2003 Utahn of the Year.

Preceded in death by her parents, grandson Anthony McKay Fairclough, and siblings/in-laws Paul Marston Smith (Verna), Vern Hadley Smith (Darlene Kay), and Carl Thomas Smith (Mary Alana). Survived by her

husband, Myron, children Stephen Brett Walker (Caroline), David Walden Walker, Bryan Jesse Walker (Christine), Lori Waltman (Scott), Mylene Fairclough (Thomas), Nena Slighting (Alan) and Thomas Myron Walker (Chrissie), sister (Karen Soelberg (LeGrand), 25 grandchildren, 25 great grandchildren and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Friday, December 4, 2015 at 12 pm at the Canyon Rim Stake Center, 3051 South 2900 East, Salt Lake City, Utah. Friends and family may visit Thursday, December 3 from 4 pm-7 pm in the Gold Room, Utah State Capitol and also at the Stake Center Friday morning 10:30 am – 11:30 am, prior to the service. Interment will be at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Online guestbook to post messages and tributes for the family is available at: www.HolbrookMortuary.com.

The family wishes to express their thanks to the great citizens of Utah for their support and love throughout Olene's years of public service. In lieu of flowers, please read with a child or send a contribution to the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service at Weber State University.