



Carolyn Burton

May 12, 2024

Carolyn Marie Burton found peace in her heavenly home on Sunday, May 12, 2024, at age 92, surrounded by family at her Red Feather Lakes, Colorado cabin.

Carolyn was welcomed by Our Heavenly Father, her beloved husband Billy, her parents Mamie and Sander, her sisters Ginny and Ruthie, her daughter Kristie, her son-in-law Rick, her grandson Jason, and all the family and friends who have gone before her.

Carolyn was born on December 15, 1931, to Marie “Mamie” and Sander Ekstrand in Omaha, Nebraska. She grew up with her two older sisters Virginia “Ginny” Margareta Ekstrand Peterson and Ruth “Ruthie” Elaine Ekstrand.

Mamie and Sander immigrated to the U.S. in 1921 for the freedom to speak, worship and live as freethinking individuals and to marry each other. Carolyn learned from her parents early on that being an American was a privilege and a source of pride. Carolyn also loved being Swedish and learning about her heritage. However, she wasn’t very fond of Swedish cuisine—thought it was “too bland.”

Growing up, Carolyn learned how to sew and play piano from her mother and enjoyed fishing with her father. Despite lifelong hearing loss, Carolyn loved

music and always believed it was important to have music in the home.

When Carolyn's mother Mamie heard about Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, while listening to her favorite homemaking radio show, she convinced Sander to stop on their way to the Black Hills for a family vacation. Carolyn said her dad fell in love with the area "at first sight", and she learned later it was because it reminded him of his home country. He purchased a plot of land on their second day, and the family began to visit every summer.

To Carolyn's parents' surprise, some of their friends from Omaha also had property in Red Feather. In 1962, their group of friends—all from different religious denominations—formed the Chapel in the Pines, a church where members of all denominations are still welcome to worship together and learn from each other.

Carolyn had a genuine calling for taking care of others. From the day she was born, she wanted to help care for her older sister Ruthie who had special needs. Carolyn then went on to pursue a career in nursing, starting when she was just 13 years old and taking a bus to work as a "floor girl".

Carolyn graduated from Immanuel Hospital School of Nursing in 1953 and practiced as a Registered Nurse for 36 years. Her career included health services, volunteering with the Navy during WWII, pediatrics, psychology, stress management and biofeedback. She believed in the power of the mind to heal the body and became Nebraska's very first biofeedback clinician while working at Lutheran Psychiatric Hospital. Carolyn finished her career at Midwest Clinic in Omaha in 1989.

Shortly after graduating from nursing school—while working as an industrial nurse at Mutual of Omaha—Carolyn treated a man with cold symptoms. Carolyn described him as "kind, considerate and caring." The two went on a

date—where Carolyn tasted her first-ever slice of pizza—and she immediately fell in love with his passion for life. She married Billy James Burton nine months later on April 9, 1955, at Bethel Lutheran Church in Omaha.

Together Carolyn and Bill raised three beautiful children—William “Biff” Frederick Burton, Kristie Kay Burton-Barbieri and Robert James Burton. The family they built was Carolyn’s greatest joy, and she often thought their lives together were too good to be true. She treasured everything from dinners at home to picnics by the river to road trips along the West Coast.

Hospitality was another one of Carolyn’s gifts. She loved to dress up, host and feed others. She and Bill would host fabulous fondue parties at their home in Omaha. Carolyn often cooked the meals for their events and holidays, but her sweet tooth favored dessert. She loved caramels, hot fudge sundaes, English toffee and ice cream—she was often found baking in the kitchen or pulling a Milk Dud from her pocket.

Carolyn once described herself as a “behind-the-scenes type of person, the picker-upper, the fixer, the helper.” She would be surprised to know that so many who knew her saw her as a leading lady. She had a way of making people around her feel special—like they were the most important people in the world, and her presence will be missed in our lives every day.

In 1989, Bill and Carolyn retired to Red Feather Lakes where they had renovated Carolyn’s parent’s log cabin on Letitia Lake into a larger, year-round home. Carolyn and Bill believed it was important to volunteer and support the communities where they lived, worked and raised their family. They both loved live theater and often volunteered at the Omaha Community Playhouse. Once in Colorado, Bill volunteered with the Chapel, Fire Department and Lyons Club, and Carolyn helped form Friends of the Library, served as the President

of Mountain Gals and on the Building Committee of the Historical Society.

From her childhood years volunteering in the Lutheran church to her adult years serving in the Presbyterian church, Carolyn believed it was important as a member to donate her time. She was extremely active in the Chapel of the Pines for more than 25 years. Her contributions included cleaning and decorating the sanctuary, shoveling snow, arranging visiting ministers, working at the Chapel Thrift Shop, serving on various boards and committees and serving as Chapel President for five years.

She especially enjoyed organizing church events and fundraisers, including weddings and the annual Chapel Bazaar, as well as picking out the Chapel's annual Christmas tree with her dear friend Dick Stroh. Carolyn loved the Christmas holiday but was even more fond of Holy Week and celebrating what the Resurrection meant for her and her loved ones.

When Bill's health began to decline, Carolyn lovingly cared for her husband in their mountain home until he entered into rest on March 17, 2012. Carolyn's faith comforted her as she grieved her husband, her grandson and more recently, her daughter. She never feared death, but instead thought of it as the beginning of a new and better life.

Carolyn was always a fighter and able to find the silver lining in even the darkest moments—including through years of chronic back pain and an ovarian cancer diagnosis in October of 2019. She was hospitalized for pneumonia-induced sepsis in 2023, but she told us she wasn't ready to go yet. She said Swedish girls are stubborn, and if you knew Carolyn, you know that's true.

Carolyn passed away on Mother's Day where she was celebrated for being a devoted and loving mother to her three beautiful children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. We'll remember our mom, grandma and "Gigi" for

her fierce independence, her delicious baking “flops”, her warm Burton hugs, the love, silliness, and imagination she showed her family, her colorful stories and her obsession with cleanliness. We’ll remember how she loved to read on her back porch swing in the summer, the way she appreciated road trips through the Great Plains and the way she always took such good care of us—often putting our needs above her own.

We find peace knowing that Carolyn is no longer in pain—that the weight she has long carried on her back while caring for others has been lifted. And we find peace in her deep-rooted faith and belief in heaven as an eternal place of healing and unimaginable joy. Another bright light went out in the world when she left us, but we know she made it home safe, is making heaven shine even brighter and will always be our angel.

Carolyn is survived by her two sons, William “Biff” (Lisa) Burton and Robert (Melonie) Burton, seven grandchildren, Shannon Scarbrough, Lisa Pistone, Sydnie Burton, Russell (Bree) Burton, Rebecca Burton, Coleton Burton and Sarah (Austin) Mickle, and six great-grandchildren, Elijah Scarbrough, Levi Pistone, Jase Pistone, Dana Scarbrough, Madilyn Burton and Oliver Mickle.

Family and friends are invited to gather for a Celebration of Life and Interment at the Chapel in the Pines on Thursday, June 20, at 11 am with a BBQ reception to follow at the family home.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations in Carolyn’s name to the Chapel in the Pines.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN **20**. 11:00 AM (MT)

Chapel in the Pines
23947 W County Rd 74e
Red Feather Lakes, CO 80545

Family and friends are invited to gather for a Celebration of Life and Interment at the Chapel in the Pines on Thursday, June 20, at 11 am with a BBQ reception to follow at the family home.

Tribute Wall

SB

“ 18 files added to the tribute wall



Sydney Burton - May 24, 2024 at 06:33 PM

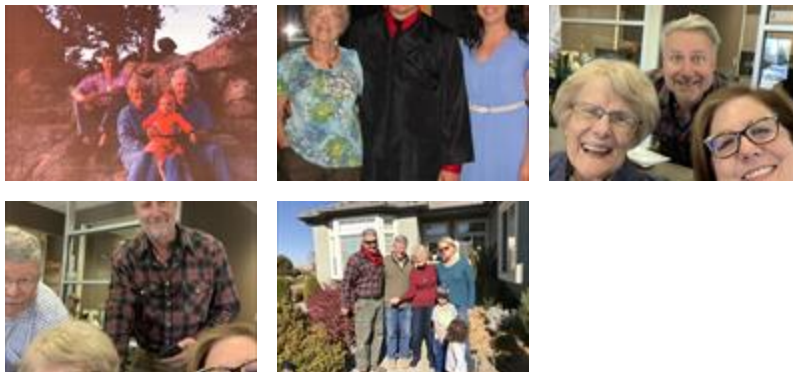
JW

“ I had the pleasure of meeting this wonderful lady a few months ago. With laughter, she told me where she lived in Red Feather Lakes...on Nofing Way. A delightful lady. - Janice Weixelman

Janice Weixelman - May 27, 2024 at 10:20 AM

MB

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Melonie Burton - May 26, 2024 at 03:10 PM

SB

“ 19 files added to the album *Memories of Carolyn*



Sydney Burton - May 24, 2024 at 06:37 PM

SB

“ 10 files added to the album *Memories of Carolyn*



Sydney Burton - May 24, 2024 at 06:13 PM