



# Arlene Nelson Williams

FEB 25, 1925 - APR 15, 2017



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# Arlene Nelson Williams

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**A**rlene Nelson Williams, 92, a native of Madison County, Idaho, passed away on April 15, 2017, in Springville, Utah.

Born Feb. 25, 1925 on a farm in Burton, Idaho, she was the oldest of eleven children born to Andrew Anderson Nelson and Wilhelmina Van der Wel. Growing up in Burton and Herbert during the depression and in Rexburg during the war years, she felt a loving bond to her family and developed a strong work ethic, both of which attributes she passed along to her children. Among her happiest memories of her youth were skiing on the Rexburg bench and enjoying the outdoors with her family; camping, picnics at the sand hills, and especially huckleberry picking and visiting with extended family.

Her zest for life brought her delight in the simplest of pleasures and her sense of fun and bright smile lit up those around her. A life-long member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she served many years in the Primary and Relief Society organizations. She ardently shared her strong testimony with many children, including her own, preparing them well for baptism and an enduring commitment to the principles of the gospel she loved so much.

Following graduation from Madison High School, class of 1944, she earned an Associate's Degree from Ricks College in 1946. She chose to become a nurse at the tender age of five and fulfilled that dream when she graduated from the LDS School of Nursing at Idaho Falls in 1949. She then earned a BS degree in Nursing from BYU. She used her knowledge and skills to contribute to the care of young and old in hospitals and nursing homes during nearly 45 years of service. Her favorite nursing field was obstetrics. Her children and their pets were frequent beneficiaries of her gifts of healing.

She met Leslie Warren Williams of Modesto, California, at a BYU matinee dance in 1950 and they married on May 25, 1951 in Salida, California, following their graduations. Their union was solemnized in the Salt Lake LDS Temple the following December. Parents of six daughters;



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Arlene loved being a mother and leaves a legacy of faith, respect, serving, and taking joy in the journey.

Though most of Arlene's adult life was spent in Northern California, Western Colorado and in Utah, her heart has always been in Idaho where she spent most of her summers, always cheering as she crossed the border into her home state. Perhaps her greatest love was collecting names and stories of ancestors on her husband's and her own lines. She interviewed many aging relatives, acquired books, and learned research skills which she passed along to her daughters who have been greatly blessed by her love of family history. Though her own ancestors came from Holland, Norway, Scotland, and Ireland, she felt a kinship with all people.

She was preceded in death by her husband, L. Warren Williams; sisters: Lois Hatch, Coral Harris, brothers: Kwenden, Marvin, Dwain, Zryl, and David Nelson. She is survived by sisters Merla Nelson, Nelljean Harris, and brother Nylin Nelson and her daughters: Vivian (Steve) Milius of Rexburg, ID; Gwen Williams (Bill Gibson) of Kayenta, AZ; Velinda Williams-Mitchell of Springville, UT; Dawna (Edwin) Sexton of Rexburg, ID; Natasha (Dean) Boren of Bountiful, UT; and Tara (Vance) Carolin of Kalispell, MT; 32 grandchildren; and 38 great-grandchildren.

Her cheerful, heartfelt and loving phrase at every parting, for which she will be remembered by all, was "Good Luck and Be Safe!"

Her funeral is Tuesday, April 18, at 11:00 a.m. at 3599 S. Orchard Drive in Bountiful, Utah. Her viewing will precede the funeral at 10:00 a.m. Her internment is in the Bountiful City Cemetery.



## Tribute Wall

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**Tara W. Carolin** posted:

Life of an Idaho Girl by John Gibson part 3. Read part 1 posted by GWEN first, then the continued post by TC, and lastly this one. A sad event Arlene well remembers occurred in the year 1936. The sugar beets got a disease called "curly top" and died; then a hail storm beat down all the wheat. The next year, when Arlene was twelve, brought more sorrow when a bank took her farm from her family and they had to move into a small dilapidated house in a town called Rexburg, Idaho. Arlene told her father that they could not live in that house because it was going to fall down. Yet her father said it was good enough. Well, 75 years later that house is still standing and Arlene still visits that place whenever she can, which is often. In fact, two of her sisters continue to live there, having just added plumbing and few years ago. Arlene believes that her greatest accomplishment is being a mother of six daughters who all graduated from college. She is glad that they all go to church and attend LDS temple services.

May 7 at 4:08 AM



TC

**Tara Carolin** posted:

Life of an Idaho Girl by John Gibson continued. Arlene's grandmother Nelson used a buggy pulled by her horse. Her father hitched the horse to the buggy when she wanted to go to town or when she went out to attend to a birth. Her father bought a Model T Ford in 1910; this is what the family rode in when they went places. Arlene rode to school in a sugar beet truck. They nailed benches to the bed of the truck for the schoolchildren to sit on and put a wooden roof over the top. There were no glass windows. In the winter when there was snow on the roads, Arlene rode to school in a sheep wagon with sleigh runners pulled by horses. Again there were benches nailed to the floor for her to sit on. They pulled a canvas tarp over the top and opened a half gate in the back to climb in and out. Some of the boys attending the high school would jump out and run behind the wagon for awhile to get warmed up. They also put hot bricks on the floor to keep the students' feet warm. Some of the schoolchildren put hot baked potatoes in their pockets to keep their hands warm. Two high school boys drove the sheep wagon. They liked to turn the wagon over in a snowdrift to pile up the girls on one side of the wagon. Arlene always tried to guess which way the wagon would fall so she could be on the side that would be on the bottom; she did not want to fall very far! Arlene attended these schools: Washington Grade School, Madison High School, Rick's College, LDS Nursing School, and Brigham Young University. Arlene's favorite teacher was Mrs. Belmat, her fourth grade teacher. She was a good teacher in Arlene's opinion; she read stories to the children. Loa Jensen was Arlene's best childhood friend and what Arlene remembers about her is that she was her friend at school and at the church they both attended. They played running games like three deep and tag; they also liked to go exploring. Sadly, Loa got very sick and died. As mentioned, Arlene had a nick name as a child: Airliner. Her brothers were the ones that invented it; they changed her name, Arlene into Airliner. One special adult in Arlene's life that she looked up to was someone named Mrs. Davis, who took an interest in Arlene when she was in the sixth and seventh grades. She taught her to do a lot of fun things like art work, sewing, and needlework. Her father's aunt, Sarah Ann Barnes, was another person that Arlene looked up to, because she was good to her siblings and others, including Arlene, and gave them cookies and milk. She was also the truant officer, whose job it was to go and find the children who were not coming to school, get them dressed, and bring them to school. Some things that Arlene treasured and kept safely hidden from everyone else were a bird coloring book and a doll. The doll was named Dainty Dorothy. She hid them in the bottom dresser drawer under all the other things there. She hid them because her brothers would take them from her just to torment her. That said, the family was close, and times were mostly good. Arlene remembers a time from her childhood that made her laugh and that still makes her laugh today. All four of her brothers' hair was getting pretty long. Her mother had asked the boys' father to cut their hair; however, he did not get around to doing it. Therefore, one day, her mother got tired of it and got a curling iron and curled all their hair into long ringlets. Then she put dresses on them and sent them out to the fields to find their father. When found, he was shocked but saw the humor in it, so went back to the cabin, and got out a camera, and took pictures of them. After that, the dresses came off and he finally cut their hair. To be continued in part 3.

April 16 at 9:07 AM



## Tribute Wall

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TW

**Toni Williams** posted:

My beautiful Aunt Arlene has begun another journey. I know she will be missed by her loving daughters and extended family. We will all miss her love and quick wit. She was always so sweet and caring and always had something good to say about everyone. I will miss her dearly. She is now with her loving husband Leslie Warren Williams. Good Luck and Be Safe! Toni Williams

April 17 at 5:13 PM

DN

**Diane Nelson** posted:

Arlene was always a sweet sister-in-law to me! -Kind, helpful. And was willing to share ,Cheerful, and a delight to visit with! Diane

April 17 at 3:33 PM

KR

**Karla Robins** posted:

My Aunt Arlene was always smiling! She was always asking about everyone else and was not concerned with herself. She was outgoing and friendly to all. I loved being around her. She had a unique voice and way of speaking that was endearing. I know she had a great relationship with my mother, Lois. She will be remembered for her positive attitude and her ending salutation; "Good Luck and Be Safe!"

April 17 at 1:04 PM

JG

**Jacqueline Grange** posted:

Sending love to all the Williams girls. You were so lucky to have great parents and wonderful memories of growing up. I feel privileged to have known so many of you.

April 17 at 12:28 PM



## Tribute Wall

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GW

**Gwen Williams** posted:

The Life of an Idaho Girl  
John Gibson  
Few people in America started speaking Dutch at age two, were called "Airliner" as a child, and went to school in a sugar beet truck, yet my grandmother is one of those people. Her name is Arlene Nelson Williams. My grandmother's maiden name is Nelson and her married name is Williams. Her clans are Dutch, Norwegian, Irish, and Scottish. She grew up in Idaho. As an adult, she lived in California for twenty-five years, then Colorado for just over twenty years, and finally in Provo, Utah for the past 16 years. She now lives in Orem, Utah, just a few miles from her former home. Her mother was Wilhelmina Van der Wel; her family called her Mini. She was born in Holland, (the Netherlands) and came to Utah with her family when she was six years old. Her family moved to Idaho when she was a teenager. Her father, Andrew Nelson, who was born in Utah, moved to Idaho with his mother and brothers to live with their grandfather after their father contracted the flu and died. Arlene's maternal grandparents' names were Neeltje Barendregt and Jan Van der Wel, both of whom were born in the Netherlands. Her paternal grandfather was David Nelson; his family came from Ireland. Her paternal grandmother was Almira Mae Anderson, though they called her Mae. Her father was Norwegian and her mother was from Scotland and came to the west with her family pulling a handcart across the Great Plains in one of the great migrations in human history. Arlene Nelson was born on February 25, 1925 in Burton, Idaho in a log cabin that would become her home. Her grandmother Nelson attended the birth. She was a midwife and attended to most of the births in the area in those days. On October 15, 1927 her mother got very sick, prompting Arlene's grandmother to take Arlene to live with her. She was only two years old. They only spoke Dutch at the house, so Arlene learned to speak Dutch, as stated above. Months later she returned to her mother, who wanted Arlene to speak English, not Dutch. Since Arlene either preferred Dutch or had trouble with English, she decided not to speak again. One day, however, her mother took her out for a walk. It was early spring and the day was warm and the grass was just starting to peek through the snow. The trees were just beginning to leaf out. She said "Kijk is er een booma," which translates as "Look, there is a tree." She has been talking ever since that day. Arlene's first home was a three room log house. The eastern room was where her grandmother Nelson lived. She had her own stove, table, and bed in that room. The western room was the kitchen her family used. It was complete with a stove, a table, and a cupboard. The room in the middle was where her parents and the children slept. There was a very narrow staircase in my grandmother's room up to a loft, which had two rooms. The walls were slanted because they were actually the roof. One room was where things were stored and the other room was where her father's cousin lived. The log cabin was very cold in the winter; Arlene and her siblings bundled together on one bed to stay warm at night. In the summer, however, the house was warm. They used a stove behind the cabin to cook outside, so the cabin would not get too hot. People put wires in the cabin so Arlene and her family had electric light bulbs that hung from wires. These electric wires were not strong enough for any machines, appliances or even a radio. Arlene and her family used a battery operated radio that her dad built himself. There was not any indoor plumbing; children had to carry the water into the house in buckets. They heated water on the stove for baths, and of course, there was an outhouse. Arlene's favorite food was doughnuts! Her Dutch auntie made really good doughnuts. She had a doughnut cutter that cut out three doughnuts at a time. Then she cooked them in hot oil and turned them over with a fork. Arlene's grandmother Nelson used a buggy pulled by her horse. Her father hitched



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April 16 at 9:07 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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