



Helga Pruess Pratt

February 16, 1942 - February 9, 2020

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Helga Pruess Pratt was born on February 16, 1942, in Hamburg, Germany. She passed away on February 9, 2020 in Salt Lake City, Utah, with faith, peace, and courage (and maybe even a sense of adventure) less than a month after being diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme. She was a faithful member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was true to her testimony of the restored gospel all her days. She had no greater joy than spending time with her loved ones, especially family, and to hear that her children walked in truth.

Helga was the youngest of Rosalie and Richard Pruess's six children. Born during World War II, her first years were filled with famine and hardship. On July 24, 1943, she lost her first home when American forces carpet bombed her city in the outskirts of Hamburg (Rahlstedt), Germany. The bombing campaign, called "Operation Gomorrah" by Allied Forces, killed an estimated 35,000 civilians and injured around 125,000 more. Though their home was bombed, her entire family made it out alive and were able to save the family piano and sing songs of thanksgiving for their lives as they watched their house burn. She was 17 months old at the time and was still able to remember portions of that night as an adult.

Helga's toddler years were spent fleeing death. She was frequently separated from parents and siblings by either government orders or circumstances of war that required separation to survive. Some of her first babysitters were Russian prisoners of war tasked with rebuilding her family's home after the bombing. They taught her how to throw and catch a ball during work breaks.

At age 11, Helga and her parents were sponsored to emigrate to America, joining sisters who had emigrated earlier and leaving a beloved brother behind. They made the voyage to the United States by sea, arriving in December 1952, and moved to Salt Lake City,

Utah, to be close to the LDS temple and to live in “Zion.”

Leaving her home, language, and friends to become a German émigré in a post-WW2 America was challenging. Helga found joy in roller skate dancing, practicing so often that she received her own keys to the skating rink to use in off hours. She achieved bronze, silver, and gold bars in roller skating while competing on local and national levels.

In her twenties, Helga signed with a modeling agency and modeled for ZCMI, Makoff, and other retailers. She enjoyed fashion, her teal-and-white '56 Chevy, and the beautiful things in life. She was also excellent at sewing, creating designs all her own in her younger years.

Helga married Jim Pratt in 1969. Her late twenties and thirties were spent raising children and competing in roller skating. When her children were all in school, she worked part-time so she could be out in the world, meet people, and always have pocket money. She'd learned in her early years that life is uncertain and having a roof over your head is not a given. She liked to maintain employable skills to make sure she could take care of herself if needed. She was very independent.

If Helga had a full-time career, she likely would have chosen natural medicine. Medicine, diet, and health fascinated Helga her entire life, as did stories of near-death experiences and what happens after we die. This is unsurprising, given that she lost three of her five siblings to war or accidents while she was still a child.

Helga loved to travel, visiting many countries including Egypt, Israel, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, and China. She even made it back to Germany to visit her home. She had a fascination with the beauty of the world and what people could accomplish when they put their minds to it. She was an avid reader and always had a book or magazine waiting anywhere she thought she might sit and rest awhile. She loved plays and musicals and was a season-ticket holder at the Hale Center Theater. She took care of herself, passing physical exams with flying colors up to three weeks before passing away. Before her life was cut short, Helga was on the path to teaching senior citizens and people with special needs how to ballroom dance. She'd just had knee-replacement surgery so she could leave pain behind and dance more.

Helga is preceded in death by her parents and four siblings (Richard, Lygia, Siegfried, Lieselotte). She is survived by her five children (Michael, Steven, Robert, David, Sheralyn), 12 grandchildren, and one sister (Hilde Mueller). She will be dearly missed by family and friends who find comfort in the belief that loved ones on the other side are

welcoming her with joy. Her family offers their sincerest thanks to the many friends, family, and medical staff who visited and attended Helga with love and compassion.

Funeral services 11:00 am, Monday, February 17, 2020 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meeting house located at 2080 East 5165 South, Holladay, Utah with a viewing prior to services from 9:45 to 10:45 am and 6 to 8 pm, Sunday, February 16, 2020 at the church. Interment at Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park.

Cemetery

Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park

3401 South Highland Drive

Salt Lake City, UT,

Events

FEB **Funeral Services** 11:00AM

17

Cottonwood 2nd Ward

2080 East 5165 South, Holladay, UT, US

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