



## Dawn Christensen Hanks

September 1, 1933 - October 8, 2023

Dawn Christensen Hanks was born September 1st, 1933, in Driggs, Idaho, (actually in Alta, Wyoming, which is just across the state border, but it was recorded in Driggs), to Charles Elmer and Margurette Murdock Christensen. She was the fifth daughter. Maurine, Florence, Shirley and LaRita were her older sisters. Gayle came later, then three sons, Mark, Val and Alvie.

Dawn was born during the years of the Great Depression. As a result of the Depression, her parents lost property, but had a tract of land near the Teton River, where with much labor the land was cleared for a cattle ranch and hay farm. Dawn had many fond memories of their life there. Later they were able to purchase a home in Driggs, where the family lived for many years.

She attended elementary and high school in Driggs, was involved in many activities, including band, orchestra, choir, and basketball. One of her best friends was her cousin, Mary Jean Murdock (married to Dix Waddell) who she says was like her sister. Dawn was a good worker and at a young age learned to mow hay on not only the family farm, but on the Church farm as well.

It was in high school that she met Phillip Hanks. Their courtship extended over a period of nine years before they were married. In the meantime, Dawn attended Idaho State College with a major in music playing French horn in the Idaho State Symphony and in the college band. She transferred to BYU for

her senior year, changing her major to elementary education. There she roomed with her sister Gayle, and with Mary Jean. She studied piano from her early years and became very proficient, using her talent in many callings throughout her life.

Following graduation from BYU, Dawn taught elementary school for one year in Victor, Idaho. Phil returned from his mission to Samoa in 1956 and they were married soon after in the Idaho Falls Temple. They moved to Mackay, Idaho, where Phil was employed as a teacher. While there, both Dawn and Phil had about five callings each in the Mackay Ward. It was while they were in Mackay that their first child, Richard Phillip, was born. He contracted the Asian flu which developed into spinal meningitis and within six weeks he passed away, bringing much sadness to them. Phil then had an opportunity to return to Samoa as a teacher in the Church school. Dawn willingly agreed that it would be a good experience, although it would be difficult to leave her parents and family for the three-year contract. Also, she was expecting their second child. She was a bit apprehensive about giving birth in a foreign country, but the doctor reassured her that “children are born all over the world.”

Soon after their arrival in Samoa, their daughter Kathryn Tava'esina was born. Two years later, a son joined them, Christon David. They were also blessed by having a young Samoan girl, Marini Laulu, come to live with them. They helped her receive an education, and in return Marini helped in caring for the children, who grew to love and adore her as a big sister. During this time Dawn studied and became fluent in the Samoan language, going to the mission home each morning and studying with the full-time missionaries. As the end was approaching of their three-year contract in Samoa, Dawn wondered why she had studied the Samoan language, now they were leaving, and she would have no need or use of the language.

The answer came when they were surprised to receive a call to be mission leaders of the Samoan Mission. She was just 28 at this time and Phil was 29. With a short break and visit to parents and family in the States she and Phil took over the reigns of the Samoan Mission, where she became president of all women's auxiliaries, mission mother, and was in charge of the meal purchases and preparations, house help, and especially the mother of two children—soon to be added another daughter Marilyn Tafaoata, and two years later still another daughter, Carol Moana.

While in Samoa, even though she was young, Dawn endeared herself not only to the missionaries, but to the Saints as well, especially the women in the Relief Society. Because of her ability to speak the language, she was able to communicate well with them. She would visit the various branches and districts of the mission, was willing to sit on the mats in the fales (houses) and teach child care, sanitation, family relationships, as well as to bear her testimony of the gospel.

After four years in the mission, she returned to the States a few weeks before Phil, because she was expecting another baby. Just a few days after Phil returned, Dawn gave birth to Lisa Dawn. They lived in Pleasant Grove where Phil taught seminary for the Church Educational System. During the four years there, two more children were born, Alan Wright and John Percy. Marini also came from Samoa to live with them.

Phil's work took them to Parowan, Utah, where they lived for 16 years. This was difficult for Dawn because she was far away again from her family and she was especially concerned for her mother who was in poor health. She grieved terribly when her mother passed away. To add to Dawn's responsibilities, she became the wife of a stake president. Sarah Elizabeth, Daniel Coridon and Nancy Jeanette were born while they lived in Parowan.

While there she became active in community affairs, with the Utah Women organization and Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Among others of her accomplishments, she compiled a history of her grandfather Alva Murdock, a book cherished by the Murdock family. She also compiled a book of Christensen descendants. Another of her talents was writing poetry and prose. She wrote life stories of her siblings as they passed on.

When Phil's assignment changed to work in the Central Office of CES in Salt Lake City, the family moved to Sandy, Utah, where they lived until Phil's next assignment was to return to Samoa as director of schools and religious education for the Church. Dawn was asked to write a curriculum for the elementary schools.

Phil retired after this assignment and they returned to Sandy. The filled out missionary applications and served in the Church Office Building processing senior missionaries for CES. Later, Dawn and Phil were called to serve a service mission at Deseret Industries. Then in 2000 they submitted their application to serve another full-time mission and were called to a CES mission in Ukraine, and after returning from that mission, a year later they were blessed to be called to serve again in Ukraine. After this mission they were again called to serve as missionaries in the Freiberg Germany Temple. It was during their time in Freiberg that they were called to become president and matron of the Apia Samoa Temple.

Even though Dawn wanted to continue with other missions, her health was such that it was not wise. She loved serving in the temple wherever she lived, Jordan River, Samoa, Draper, and Mt. Timpanogos. She especially loved serving as organist in the Mt. Timpanogos Temple. Throughout her adult life she was active in Family History and provided many opportunities for her ancestors to receive temple ordinances.

To be closer to family members, they had a home built in Lehi. In later years they have enjoyed weekly lunches with cousins Dix and Mary Jean Waddell and Clyda Blackburn. They resided in Lehi until Dawn's death, which occurred on October 8th. Dawn thrived in visits from children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She made temple quilts for each of her children as they were married, and sent birthday cards to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Hers was a life of service to others and sacrifice for her husband and eleven children. She had a life-long testimony of Jesus Christ and took the opportunity of sharing it with people wherever she was living and serving.

She is survived by her husband, Phil; three brothers, Mark, Val and Alvie, and her ten children. Her parents and her son Richard preceded her in death.

A viewing will be held at the Lehi South Stake chapel, 600 South 500 West on Thursday, October 12, at 6:00-8:00 and from 9:00-11:00 on Friday, October 13. Funeral services will follow at the same location at 11:00. Burial will take place in the Cache-Clawson Cemetery in Teton, Idaho, on Saturday, October 14, at 1:00 p.m.

Special appreciation is extended to A-Plus Hospice Care and to Beyond Senior Care for their kind and loving service.

Click <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83544947780?pwd=VDZ4K3pWQ0ZWVENP enNLcGtITnA5QcT09> to start or join a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Meeting ID: 835-4494-7780

Passcode: Funeral

# Cemetery Details

## Cache-Clawson Cemetery

Coordinates: 43.81560, -111.14190  
Tetonia, ID 80422

# Previous Events

## Viewing

OCT **12**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (MT)

Lehi South Stake Chapel  
600 South 500 West  
Lehi, UT 84043

## Viewing

OCT **13**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

Lehi South Stake Chapel  
600 South 500 West  
Lehi, UT 84043

## Funeral Service

OCT **13**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

Lehi South Stake Chapel  
600 South 500 West  
Lehi, UT 84043

## Graveside Service

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OCT **14**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Cache-Clawson Cemetery

Coordinates: 43.81560, -111.14190

Tetonia, ID 80422

# Tribute Wall

D1

“ Have many memories of Sister Hanks while serving as a missionary in Samoa 1963-1966, although Pres and Sis Hanks were released prior to the end of my mission. I remember one time coming into the mission home after being absent out in the field for about 6 months. When I saw Sis Hanks she looked so much thinner. I asked her if she had been ill and she laughed and showed me her newly born baby. She thought that was really fun. Another time we were tracting in a bad rainstorm when Sister Hanks drove up out of the vao and surprised us. She stopped the old mission car, rolled down the window and scolded us for being out in the rain. She said she was going to tell President Hanks on us. We both pleaded not to be reported and we were headed to get out of the rain. I don't think she believed us. Another time while being assigned in Mesepa, American Samoa, my companion (Elder Joseph Danielson) and I lived in a small fale palagi that was often full of rats. She happened to stop one day as we were leaving for the day and we proudly showed her the markings on the door that indicated we had killed 39 rats in that house. She was horrified. She said that she was going to go back and report it to "Phil" (she didn't say President Hanks). And sure enough we ended up moving out of that house. Being young and invincible we were proud of our feat. She was pretty steamed. I have nothing but great memories of Sister Hanks and President Hanks, two Saints in every sense of the word.

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**Doug Rose (Samoa 1963-66)** - October 11, 2023 at 07:51 PM

NJ

“ What a Wonderful gift of a Life lived for Christ

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**Nancy Jackson** - October 11, 2023 at 12:41 PM



“ I served with the Hanks in Ukraine and I remember one p-day sister hanks called us and asked if we could come over and give her a perm. It was such a fun day helping put rollers in her hair. I also remember that on my wedding day Brother and Sister Hanks just happened to be coming to the temple while we were taking pictures outside so I have pictures with them at my wedding and they are in my wedding video. Sister Hanks was pure joy and sunshine. -Amber Jack Freiss

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**Amber Freiss** - October 11, 2023 at 09:47 AM

AM

“ Sister Hanks is such a kind an lovely person, I met her and her husband when they were serving as a senior couple in Kharkiv Ukraine many years ago, back then I was just a little boy who joined the Church and I still remember their smiling faces, care and love. Hope to see them again someday, at some wonderful place)

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**Anton Mikhailovski** - October 11, 2023 at 05:12 AM

ZW

“ Dawn Hanks was a wonderful neighbor when we lived on country Lane. She was always so pleasant and friendly. Prayers for peace and comfort for her husband and all her family.

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**Zerilda Wornica** - October 10, 2023 at 11:26 PM

SW

I'm ever grateful we had the opportunity to spend a bit of time in their home. Dawn was also so sweet and attentive. May Heavenly Father's most choicest blessings be with each of her family members. Gone from this life, never to be forgotten.

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**Sandra Warkentin** - October 11, 2023 at 01:47 AM

SW

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Sandra Warkentin - October 11, 2023 at 01:48 AM

MW

*All summer long every time we had lunch with Dawn and Phil, Dawn would give me extra hugs like it might be a while before I saw her again. I am keeping all of them in my memory now. I miss her already!*

Mary Jean Murdock Waddell

Mary Jean Waddell - October 11, 2023 at 08:35 PM

JP

“ A great woman! So glad I could be her cousin and know her!

JOHN PARKS - October 10, 2023 at 11:16 PM

DH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Dan Hanks - October 10, 2023 at 09:58 PM

DH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Dan Hanks - October 10, 2023 at 09:57 PM

DH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Dan Hanks** - October 10, 2023 at 09:56 PM