



## Lila Mae Debenham

February 28, 1933 - March 20, 2025

Funeral zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98552647867>

In the early morning hours of March 20, 2025, during the last breaths of winter, Lila Mae Debenham, 92, joined her Darling Duke, Shirle Arthur, in her heavenly home. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and friend to all, Lila Mae will be greatly missed.

Born in Delta, Utah on February 28, 1933, to John Lorenzo and Rosetta Albrecht Sampson, Lila Mae was the youngest of thirteen children and a delight to all who knew her. In her early years, she lived on a farm where she loved playing in the irrigation ditches and helping her mama in the kitchen. Her parents taught her kindness and compassion through their example of never speaking a cross word to each other. In her patriarchal blessing, she learned that she provided “music and song for spirits before they came to earth,” and she certainly provided music literally and metaphorically to many throughout her life. In high school, she sang in a trio called the Delta Harmonettes, which performed at churches, funerals, rodeos, and even once in the Manti Temple. She learned perseverance and hard work in her early years, working to pay for her clothing and personal needs. One high school math teacher taught her a valuable lesson that never left her: “If you have a bad thought, you can get rid of it or build a welcome nest for it like a bird in a tree.” She decided at that moment to banish bad thoughts and to see the good

in others, a trait that allowed her to show unmatched love to everyone with whom she came in contact.

Lila Mae graduated from Delta High School in 1951, earning a scholarship to Dixie College, where she received a humanities degree in 1953. In 1956, she graduated from Excelsius School of Cosmetology and worked as a hairstylist for a few years thereafter.

She married Shirle Arthur Debenham (Arthur) in the Salt Lake Temple on November 15, 1955, and, throughout their marriage, they lived in Germany, Washington D.C., Texas, California, Alaska, and Utah. Lila Mae adored her husband and children and gave her life in service to them. She was an exemplary homemaker, a work that brought her great joy and satisfaction. She loved to bake and cook nourishing food, offering “superman juice” or a slice of the best apple pie ever! to her children, grandchildren, and anyone else who chanced upon her kitchen. She also delighted in a clean, orderly home, with pretty things surrounding her, including the many treasures she and Arthur found during their travels to 43 countries.

She was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where she served in a variety of callings, including ward and stake relief society president. In 1998, they fulfilled a lifelong dream of serving a mission and were called to Vladivostok, Russia, utilizing the Russian language Arthur spoke fluently and the language of love that Lila Mae spoke like no other. Upon their return, they made their home in Sandy, Utah in the “best neighborhood, the best ward, and the best stake in the world.”

Our hearts are emptier without her here, but we will strive to carry on in the way she taught us. Lila Mae could make anyone who spent time with her feel like they were a treasure and a pure joy. Her prayers were sacred conversations with a beloved friend. Her testimony of her Savior and His

reality left your faith strengthened and your heart encouraged. She found beauty in the world around her and sought reasons to show gratitude every day. And every gift was the “best, most extraordinary, most delicious, etc.” she had ever received. And you believed it was so because she believed it. Her example of love lives within all who were lucky enough to be touched by her light but especially within her posterity. She is survived by her children David Arthur (Susan), Douglas Ray (Lollie), Daniel John (Charley), Ann Debenham Phillips (Brandon), and James Howard (Jenny); 22 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren (2 on the way); brothers and sisters in law; nieces and nephews; and numerous friends who adored her. She is preceded in death by her husband, S. Arthur Debenham and her grandson Blake Debenham.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 29, at 11:00 A.M. (viewing from 9:00–10:30 A.M.) at the Pinecrest LDS Chapel, 2080 East Pinecrest Lane, Sandy, Utah. Burial service will follow at the Salt Lake City Cemetery at 200 N. St. E., Salt Lake City.

# Cemetery Details

## Salt Lake City Cemetery

200 N St E  
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

# Previous Events

## Viewing

MAR 29. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (MT)

Pinecrest Ward  
2080 E Pinecrest Lane,  
Sandy, UT

## Funeral Service

MAR 29. 11:00 AM (MT)

Pinecrest Ward  
2080 E Pinecrest Lane,  
Sandy, UT

# Tribute Wall

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“ We remember visiting Lila Mae and Arthur in California in the late 60s. Arthur was fixing the car, killing bugs, the kids were running around the sofas, and Lila Mae was very graciously preparing a lovely dinner for all of us, and humming as she went  
We remember Lila Mae reading great books and sharing events, going to lunch with everyone on Fridays, taking walks with us, sharing spiritual prayers, and fasting, having yummy nuts on the table, and preparing delicious fun dinners when it was her turn.  
Lila Mae was a mentor to us all and positive and cheerful, sharing music and in taking care of her husband. She endured in a beautiful way to the very end. We love you, Lila Mae. Marilyn, Grant.

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**Marilyn & Grant Barton** - March 26, 2025 at 01:14 PM