

Appropriately Dressed

By Lori Carter

From the days of our earliest childhood, our mother was there to make sure we were appropriately dressed for all occasions. With five daughters, this took some doing. If we had on pants when a dress was required, she would make us change. When one of us was wearing a cute new outfit that we thought should not be covered up by a coat no matter how cold it was, she would still insist that all of us wear a coat. She always dressed appropriately herself, and she made sure we did too.

Mom had spent her life teaching each of us not just how to dress but also how to live. She shared her insights about the joy of the gospel and her testimony of the importance of the temple. She made it clear that she hoped we would each come to understand the effect of temple ordinances on our eternal happiness.

Then came the day when we had to gather to dress Mom for burial. She had left this world for the next, after teaching us all she had been given time to teach us. This was our opportunity to show our devotion to her, our gratitude for the principles she instilled into our hearts.

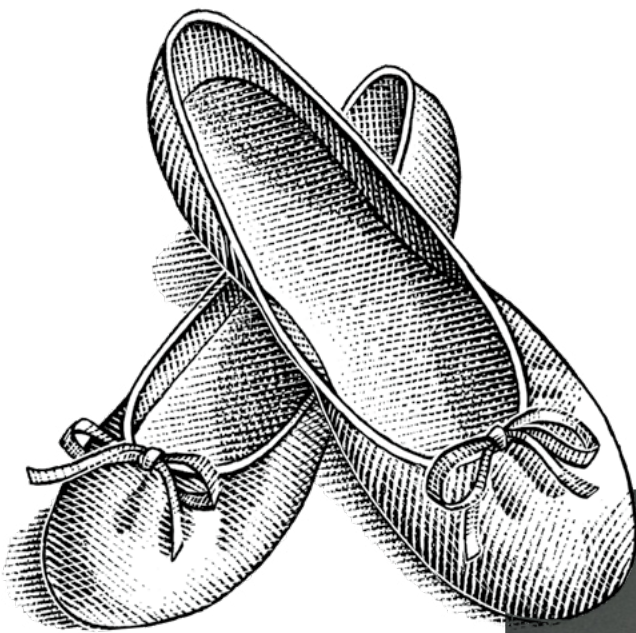
This time it was *our* job to make sure she was appropriately dressed.

When we came into the room where Mom was to be dressed for burial, her lifeless body looked empty. The warmth of her spirit was gone, replaced by the coldness of death. As her daughters and some of her granddaughters encircled her, we honored the life of this grand lady, wanting to show her, one last time, our gratitude for the blessing she had been in our lives.

We were now six daughters: Leah, Heather, Gaylene, Lori, Melinda, and daughter-in-law Adrienne. The six of us formed a tight circle around Mom. Then our own daughters created a second ring around us. These two circles brought to mind the ripple of love created by her life. Because of her influence and the righteous choices of her descendants, the blessings of temple

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covenants would ripple throughout generations, ever expanding the blessings of priesthood covenants.

Her daughters would prepare her for burial. We carefully covered her cold body with the warmth of the robes of the temple. Each ribbon was tied carefully; slippers slipped on; effort made to ensure that all the clothing was correctly in place. The last thing to do was to tie a final bow. As we did so, making sure that it was tied as nicely as we could, a memory came to each of our minds—she had tied that bow for each of us the first time we had entered the temple. As we tied hers for the last time, we were now symbolically giving back to her, with eternal gratitude, the gift of temple blessings.

As we looked at her, we were each filled with a feeling of warmth. No longer did the cold chill of death surround her. She looked beautiful. It was easy to imagine her in heaven,



encircled there by those she loved, eager to return to her Heavenly Father.

As I left the room, it occurred to me that I had now lived through the time of life when I could care for my mother. She had endured to the end. She had aged faithfully and blessed her posterity through her example. I hoped and prayed that I could do the same and that one day I could leave a similar legacy for my daughters and granddaughters. ■

The author lives in California, USA.