

## My Senior Life

By: Louise Buck

The word “graceful” makes me think of Southern women in long flowing dresses and tea on the veranda, or playing lawn games.

But to be “Full of Grace”, is entirely different. These words tell me I am a child of God.

What can it mean to ‘grow old gracefully’? People get older, but seldom think of themselves as ‘old’, or even ‘graceful’. It seems that one day you wake up and find out you have gotten old. I have always heard that “life is a journey, not a destination”. My journey has taken me in many unexpected places; seeing many beautiful sights, from one coast to the other.

When I retired at sixty-two, I assumed I would probably stay at home, read more, crochet and occasionally travel. Nothing could be farther from what has happened to me.

I was living in Oregon with one of my daughters, when my oldest daughter asked me to come to Salt Lake City to help her care for my ex-husband, who had cancer. She was trying to care for him, work and raise her own family. She was exhausted.

Caring for him, in his final year, gave me new insights into myself. I could be part of his life without losing who I was.

I have stayed on in Salt Lake and become closer to my children and grand-children; learning who they are as adults and sharing their battles and joys. What a reward!

I had decided when I became a grand-mother, to BE the kind I had wanted as a child. My own grandparents were gone except my mothers’ father and step-mother. My contacts with them were limited to summers, as they lived about fifty miles away. They didn’t seem to be grand-parents as they were still raising their own children.

Now, I have the fun of being a great-great-grandmother. Watching my daughter with her first great-grand daughter has also shown me more about myself and growing older.

I have hardly noticed the years pass. But here I am .a senior! The aches and pains that accompany aging are pretty normal. I can continue to be active; keeping in touch with the community and the senior center.

I especially like going to Sunday Anderson Senior Center. There I have found many friends and they keep getting added to. The opportunities I have been given there are boundless. Going to various places and volunteering are such fun. I’ve gone to places I would never have thought of. Like Kingsbury Hall to see the Nutcracker or on a bus to see fall colors.

So, I am growing old gracefully. Learning to accept others as they are and setting no limitations on myself. I try to meet each day; open to all possibilities.