



# Sonja Marie Tew Quigg

## Life Sketch

as Shared by Daughter:  
**Allison Quigg**  
Funeral Services  
Nov-2013



Sonja - H.S. Fresh



Warren Sonja

Goshen

1945 to 2013

*Sonja Chose to Always Celebrate Life!*

*Life Sketch: Sonja Marie Tew Quigg  
Given By: daughter - Allison Quigg  
November 9, 2013*

I was always told when bearing my testimony in church, that you should try to picture everyone in their underwear to avoid being nervous, but now that I look back on that advice, I am not so sure that would be appropriate.

My name is Allison Quigg, I am Sonja's daughter. I have had to think long and hard about how I wanted to start this today, and I have to tell you I haven't spoken in front of a large group like this since I was about 13 years old. I feel as though there are only a couple of things left for me to be able to DO for my Mother, so I wanted to speak about her today. I have spent a lot of time asking for strength to do this, and I am hoping I can hold it all together for you.

I did ask for help in writing some of this life sketch; I wanted to be able to incorporate my Mother's family in as much of today's events as possible. I thought that asking her family members for some memories they had of her, would be a wonderful place to start.

First and foremost, I need to tell everyone, that my Mother celebrated life...consistently, every year, and at SPECIFICALLY, 10 different times. Nine of the days in which my Mother celebrated life, was on each of her brother's and sister's birthdays...she never missed a one and always sent out personalized, birthday cards. And she also celebrated the life of Christ; sending out Christmas cards to family and friends. This was a memory all of her siblings would, and did have, of her. In my Uncle Kurt's words, "She had to have been the United States Postal Service's most loyal customer". It is important that the words spoken by me here today, commemorate her love of life and allow us to remember and celebrate her own life.

To start, Sonja Marie Tew Quigg was born on January 11, 1945 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Sonja was the third of ten, beautiful, AND HANDSOME, children that would be born to my wonderful grandparents, Rodney Warren and Noma Christensen Tew.

Growing up, my Mother had the opportunity to live in several, different places with her family, and spent time growing up in Roberts, Goshen, Declo, and Firth, Idaho. Although some of her childhood would be spent staying with members of her extended family, my Mother's younger years were spent growing up on a farm where her Father grew potatoes, corn, and countless other fruits and vegetables. All of the children were taught to be responsible, hard-working, and self-sufficient; however, due to a physical handicap that my

Mother had suffered from since birth, she was unable to perform some of the duties required by someone being raised on a farm.

Despite the fact my Mother was born with physical handicap, she was always a hard-worker. Rather than my Mother being forced to physically “work the fields” with the rest of her siblings, her time was often spent in the kitchen with my sweet Grandmother, learning how to prepare and cook fulfilling meals for her brothers and sisters, as well as my Grandfather once the fields were harvested, or when their work for the day was done. This is also how my Mother learned to bake, which was also something she very much enjoyed. Her younger sister, Tami, recounted that while growing up, my Mother would bake bread for everyone; six loaves at a time or dozens of homemade cookies...cookies that their brother Craig could undeniably sniff out; EVERY. SINGLE. TIME. But little sniffers beware...my Mother’s baked goods were treated similarly to the fruit found on the Tree of Life; you can look but don’t touch, you can touch but don’t taste...until you were told you may partake, or you must be prepared to be “klobber-hobbed.” Apparently, this meant that you were really in for it; my Uncle Kurt said none of them really knew what this word meant, but because it sounded so bad, they would try and mind their P’s and Q’s and practice patience in waiting for their food and goodies. Although I was never, “klobber-hobbed” by my Mother while growing up, my fingers were often threatened when sneaking into the kitchen and stealing some homemade mashed potatoes from the bowl or some meatloaf from the baking dish. I guess, despite my best efforts to hide my food-thieving, my Mother already knew the tricks of the trade and when someone had nabbed some of the Sunday dinner...thanks guys. :)

Due to the same physical limitations that kept my Mother inside cooking and cleaning with her Mother, and while her siblings were outside working with their Father, she was unable to experience some of the simplest joys of someone living on a farm such as running around freely, jumping off of hay bales, or riding a horse with ease; which – mind you – was always a family affair. Once given the opportunity, after warming up to the idea of being so high up, if my Mother found the courage to mount a horse, she wasn’t going to be getting off of it any time soon! My Aunt Becky recounts that this was almost always the case; my Mother would begin riding a horse, go around in constant circles, stop to tell her siblings, “Hello” every now and again, and then continue on riding until it got dark...smiling the entire time.

As my Mother got older, she was able to better adapt to the physical limitations she faced. She was able to work through many of these issues and become more self-sufficient; something her Father had always hoped for her and the rest of his children. Going to and THROUGH school was not always easy for my Mother, but after settling in Goshen, Idaho, she was able to attend school and eventually graduate from Firth High School. Although she graduated a year later than she was supposed to, with the Firth High School class of 1964, she was so proud to graduate with her dear brother, Kent. This last summer, I had the

privilege of taking my Mom to her 50 year, high school class reunion and she was ecstatic to have a nice lunch, and touch base with many who she had attended school with; I was grateful she was able to attend...she had talked about it constantly for weeks leading up to the event.

After finishing high school, my Mother attended Rick's College in Rexburg, Idaho for a short period of time. After deciding she would begin working full-time, and after working several different jobs, she found her niche – and love for – tending children. Two very important families to my Mother were the Milams and the Cifreases. As both of these families were made up of doctors, often working doctor's hours, she spent a lot of time with their children whom I also came to know while growing up. These families treated my Mother so well, and she spoke nothing but highly of both of them. Assuming that the Milams no longer needed her, my Mother began tending the Cifrease's children, exclusively and during this time, also met Lawrence Erskine "Larry" Quigg at a church single's dance.

My mother and he began dating. After a successful courtship, and a marriage proposal at Dr. Rocco and Dr. Sara Cifrease's home while she was working on Valentine's Day, my Mother and Father would tie the ETERNAL knot only 4 months later on June 16, 1978 in the Idaho Falls LDS Temple. Shortly after getting married, my parents decided they wanted to start a family and fill their loving home with the love and laughter of many children. My Mother would always tell me that my Father had wanted her to have a dozen kids; she politely declined but they both agreed they wanted to try to have children. After 2 miscarriages, their hopes were shattered and they decided that they should consider adoption. After consulting legal and friendly advice, they completed the paperwork and went through the motions of trying to adopt; only a short while later, they would discover that they were pregnant. They were elated, but to avoid having to explain a devastating heartbreak if something went wrong, they opted to keep the pregnancy a secret...with the exception of telling only a few, select people they were expecting, of course. On November 16, 1984, 6 ½ years after they were married, my mother gave birth to yours truly – and they couldn't have been happier. ;)

As the years passed, and as I grew up, I remember that we would always take little trips as a family; family time was always important to my parents. We would take Sunday drives after church and would consistently travel to Shelley to visit my Dad's mother, and travel to Firth to visit my Mom's parents, often as well. Our visits to Firth usually occurred on a Saturday night when my Grandfather was watching The Lawrence Welk (talent and variety) Show; we would all sit quietly in the living room until the show was over before anyone spoke...we didn't mess with Grandpa Rodney and his Lawrence Welk; furthermore, unless you brought Almond Rocas or black licorice, you wouldn't get so much as a "hello" until Lawrence Welk was over. My Mother never complained, or seemed annoyed....she knew the routine. We

would all sit patiently and my Mother would smile as she waited for her Father to finish his favorite show. After it was done, we would all sit for hours and talk. My Mother would laugh and help my Grandmother with dishes or dinner, and I always loved watching her with my Grandma. Her brother, Kurt mentioned to me while I was trying to gather some memories to share as part of this life sketch, that my Mother never whined or fought with her parents. She was never the “typical teenager” who was irritable with their parents or wanted something more than what she had got; she loved her parents unconditionally and was a wonderful example of what it’s like to “honor thy father and thy mother.”

Also on our list of frequent trips, were fishing trips. I never knew this, but my Mother learned to love fishing because of my dad. Her sister, Tami mentioned to me that my Mother took up fishing as a new hobby, and as a way to bond with my Father. My Mother, aside from the obvious reasons, must have been so happy when I was born and when my dad taught me to be a fisher. Looking back, now, it appears that I replaced her as my dad’s fishing buddy because whenever I would ask her to bait my hook with a wriggly worm, she would refuse. I was then told by my Mother, “Allison, I packed our lunch for this trip today, go ask your dad to bait your worm for you.”

Family was always important to my Mother and her commitment to my Father, was overwhelming to think about. At age 8, shortly after I was baptized, my Father had an epileptic relapse/episode that made him, quite literally, almost entirely immobile, unable to walk, and completely dependent on my Mother and me. We would have to lift my dad into bed every night and put him on a chair to transport him back and forth to bed and to his recliner in the living room. We did this for 5 years. Some days were better than others, but it was a tough job for a wife and a young girl. My mother never left my Dad to fend for himself. She was unwavering and undaunted with what she was expected to do for him, and she demonstrated so much love, compassion, and dedication to provide for, and care for him.

When I was 13 years old, I found my Father, my best friend, choking. I administered CPR to him in an attempt to save his life. After 13 days in the hospital, my Father passed away; I had never seen my Mother so crushed, so devastated, or so helpless. I hoped and prayed that my Mother and I would not have to lose my Dad; I wasn’t sure that either of us could bear that type of loss...but we were forced to. My Mother and I stuck together for awhile, but then began to distance from one another. I wanted to be a kid and do the things that a teenager does, and she wasn’t ready for me to pull away from everything we had just gone through. After a few mis-guided years...yes, it was I who was the Captain of my own ship, I learned that I was pregnant at 17 years old...I was somewhat terrified. I was still in high school and didn’t know if I was ready for what was going to happen. My Mother was quite obviously not throwing me a party when I told her I was pregnant; she actually told me that

I had just made the worst joke possible...I am sure the look on my face said it all because it was THEN that she realized I wasn't joking. After a few days of processing and praying, my Mother pulled me aside, hugged me, told me that she loved me with tears in her eyes, and that she wouldn't leave my side. There was never one word uttered from her about how I disappointed her, or that she was upset with me; she stood by my side through it all. Every doctor's appointment, every school day I attended, every time Ashley moved in my belly; we shared every part of it.

Ashley was born on February 7, 2003 – to me and my Mother. I know that may sound strange to some of you, but for 7 years of Ashley's life, my Mother was the stand in parent for her. She watched her while I finished high school, tended her during the day while I went to college here in town, and cared for her while I worked...for seven years (and even these last three years, now) she kept my most prized possession safe and sound. Ashley and my Mother were always in tow together...they even lied for each other. My mother would often take Ashley to walk with her to Smith's Grocery store. Anyone familiar with this area knows just how far of a walk that can be for someone with Asthma. If I could guess, I would say that Smith's Grocery Store is approximately ½ mile from her house, again, a good distance for someone with Asthma. As I wasn't privy to every trip to Smith's, I would think that my Mother walked there at least once a week when the weather was nice, without my expressed permission as her daughter...not like my Mom needed MY permission, she would do what she wanted, anyway. Well, my Mother knew I would come running into the store frantic if I were to learn of an unannounced trip; I am a worry-wart...plain and simple and I pleaded with her to at least call me before a trip to the store. Well, anyone who knew my Mother, I mean REALLY knew my Mother, knew that she was stubborn and would undoubtedly refuse to answer to anyone...especially her daughter. Well, this is where the lying would come into play. Ashley would be informed by my sweet, and innocent Mother, that she was not to tell me that they walked to the store. If I called, Ashley was to answer questions very vaguely...unless I heard a cashier over the intercom, then Grandma would HAVE to explain herself. This explanation usually consisted of a stern, "Oh Allison. I am JUST FINE. I am doing good. I have my breathing machine and the wagon and we will be walking back home soon." Despite my pleading to come and pick her up, she still walked home...and PROUD of her accomplishment, might I add.

In December of 2009, my Mother gave into feeling unwell after probably about 2 ½ years, and let me take her into the emergency room. Upon the visit from a doctor, and after a cat-scan, it was learned that my Mother had been suffering from a diaphragmatic hernia; meaning that a portion of my Mother's stomach had herniated up through her diaphragm, displacing her heart to the far left side of her chest cavity, pinching off a large loop of small intestine, and prohibiting her from being able to digest anything. This same issue caused her kidney to be folded in half and due to glandular issue, she was secreting too much calcium

into her bloodstream; she would have 3 surgeries over the next 5 months to correct her health conditions and improve her quality of life. My Mother was a grouchy mess during this time, as some of you may know, very well, but she toughed through it all and resumed normalcy. I grew even closer to my Mother during this time and I will cherish those memories forever.

In October of 2010, I re-met Joel, here. I have known Joel and his family since his sister Jordan and I, were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade together and we have shared many special experiences. After we began dating, and after my Mother's health had improved, Ashley and I moved out and into an apartment several months later. I commuted Ashley to and from school every day, although we lived across town, so that she could see Grandma every day after school. After the school year was over, Ashley began attending a different school and Grandma regularly stayed with us. As more and more time passed, I had my Mother almost completely migrated to our apartment when Joel and I learned that I was nearly 4 months pregnant. On November 5, 2012, I gave birth to our son Ethan – Grandma was there from the first moment of his life, and she helped raise our little guy, as well. Although she wasn't a stand-in parent this time around, the time she spent with our son on a day to day basis, over the last year, is absolutely irreplaceable.

My Mother was dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She felt that to show her dedication, she should always attend church when the weather was good enough for her to get to and from the church house without problems or having to rely on others. Over the last several weeks, and because she was staying at our home 5-6 days per week, there were times when I would take her to a later ward at this same church house; she made mention to me that she was certain that she had to be the oldest one in the ward but didn't mind because, again, her desire to go to church was more important than the age of those who were also in attendance...until about 3 weeks ago. After church I received a phone call from my Mother, as I usually did as my required status update ensuring she had made it home safely. During this call, she proceeds to tell me – with some excitement, I am convinced – that she had been attending a single's ward! She told me that they discussed having a single's dance, and a single's fireside during Sacrament Meeting and she couldn't help but begin laughing hysterically. Because her laugh was contagious, I couldn't help but to laugh with her. She went to single's ward again the following week.

On November 1, 2013, my Mother passed away suddenly in our home. Our Halloween night ended like any other night. We said our "Good-nights" and our "I love yous" after we had sat together on the couch talking about what tomorrow would bring. That night, my Mother told me she was going to wash my Crock-Pot in the morning and I attempted to dispute with her that she didn't need to do that. My Mother's response? "Allison; I do good. I do things in the mornings, and for Pete's sake; I can wash your Crock-Pot...it's not gonna

kill me.” I should tell you all, that my Mother was the greatest “Laundry Ninja” known to man...come to think of it, she is the ONLY laundry ninja we have ever met. My Mother would somehow sneak herself downstairs during the day, while tending Ethan, wash and dry a load of laundry, and have it folded before we got home from work for the day...Joel and I are perplexed. We are still trying to figure out how to manage to wash and dry only 1 large load of laundry...on the weekend.

My Mother was the first person I would talk to in the morning, and almost always, the last person I would talk with at night. We walk into our living room and the spot she had adopted on our couch is only an empty space now. We miss our TV being up loud and hearing the theme to some of her shows like: “Murder She Wrote”, “The Andy Griffith Show”, “McGyver”, “Columbo”, and “Dragnet.” Our lives have been turned upside down; our day-to-day routine is not the same, and it will never be again. We have a big and beautiful home that we had hoped would be filled with her love and contagious laughter for years to come – her room in our house is barren and only her memory remains now.

My Mother’s legacy is one of kindness, bravery, and unconditional love. She never complained that she didn’t have enough, nor did she ever feel as though she wasn’t blessed for what she did have; she was always grateful. She took countless opportunities to help those in need, and her motives were always pure; as long as she was helping others, she was able to find joy and true happiness.

Joel and I will miss her grocery lists that always consisted of a written request for chocolate and black licorice...my Mother had the biggest sweet-tooth and it wasn’t surprising if you got pegged in the face with a Butterfinger candy bar while watching TV with her. She loved her candy, but mostly, she loved to share; this is something that she always did with us, as well as her nieces and nephews.

I believe that my sweet Mother is up in Heaven watching us here today, talk about the life she led and the love she had for others. Her faith in Christ and the beauty that lies beyond us, here, was undaunted by others or hardships she was faced with. I know that she is smiling down on us, in perfect form, and that her joys are endless now that she is with her eternal companion, my dad. The reunion in Heaven with those who have passed on, I know, is a great one. It’s a promise that has been fulfilled because of her love for Christ and the Atonement. The answers we all search for, I believe, will be given to us someday; until then, we have to remember the little things we have already been blessed with. Although small and often overlooked, we should all take the opportunity to stop, and smell the roses. We should enjoy the common day things like sunshine and a beautiful rain shower. There is a song that I would like to play for you as I wrap this up. The song is called “Blessings” by Laura Story



### **Lyrics for "Blessings":**

*We pray for blessings, we pray for peace  
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep  
We pray for healing, for prosperity  
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering  
And all the while, You hear each spoken need  
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things*

*'Cause what if your blessings come through rain drops  
What if Your healing comes through tears  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise*

*We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear  
We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near  
We doubt your goodness, we doubt your love  
As if every promise from Your word is not enough  
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea  
And long that we'd have faith to believe*

*'Cause what if your blessings come through rain drops  
What if Your healing comes through tears  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise*

*When friends betray us  
When darkness seems to win  
We know that pain reminds this heart  
That this is not,  
This is not our home  
It's not our home*

*'Cause what if your blessings come through rain drops  
What if Your healing comes through tears  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near*

*What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life  
Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy  
What if trials of this life  
The rain, the storms, the hardest nights  
Are your mercies in disguise*

Thank you everyone, for being here today and to show your support and respect for my Mother. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.