

Audra Taft Smith Hendrickson 2-1-1928 – 8-31-2019



Audra Taft Smith was born on February 1, 1928 to William Clifford and Olive Taft Smith. She was their fourth child. Her sisters were Geneve, Lasca, Nadine, Anna Lou, and Diane. Her brothers were Afton, Leo, and Jaye.

Audra married Jack Hendrickson on January 18, 1949. Their extraordinarily happy marriage lasted 62 years. She was the mother of Kim, Reyn, Peter, and Rob, grandmother of Andrew, Eric, Christina, Susan, Scott, Katie, James, Thomas, and Amitai; great-grandmother to Ellie, Duncan, Violet, Charlie, and Clara.

Domiciles

Audra grew up in a two-room house in Santaquin, Utah, where she often slept in the granary. During college she lived in Laramie, Wyoming, and Provo, Utah. In 1950 she moved to East Lansing, Michigan and then to a flat on Savannah Street in Detroit. From 1954 – 1963 she lived in Northwest Detroit. She then moved to Bloomfield Hills. Audra lived in an apartment in Farmington while building a house in Bicknell, Utah, and lived there until 1991, when she moved to Birmingham, MI. Her last residence was an apartment at the Baldwin House in Birmingham.

Education

Audra was graduated from Payson High School and attended the University of Wyoming and Michigan State University where she studied English and journalism. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English at Oakland University, graduating magna cum laude with English Departmental Honors. She was designated a Student of Great Distinction and University Scholar and was the English Department's nominee in the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship competition.

Audra received a Master of Arts in the Teaching of English at Oakland University, and was granted a Secondary Continuing Teaching Certificate. Her Master's Thesis was titled "The Possibility of Tragedy in Modern Drama as Exemplified in the Works of Ibsen, Miller, and Beckett."

Except for writing her dissertation, Audra had completed requirements for a Ph.D. at Wayne State University.

Teaching Career

Audra taught English literature and journalism at Kingswood School, Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, MI for seven years. While there, she served as coordinator and advisor to three school newspapers: *Clarion*, *Crane*, and *Cranium*; was co-advisor to the Junior class, and was a member of the faculty Committee on Professionalism.

She conceived and developed an annual award for outstanding journalism students. In 1976-77, she was elected chairman of the newly-formed Kingswood faculty Council. She also taught a journalism class at Macomb Community College in Mt. Clemens, MI, and supervised publication of the weekly student newspaper, *The Journal*.

Poetry and Children's Books

Audra wrote hundreds of poems. Her poetry books include *Pollyanna's Purview*, *Balancing Act*, *Terse Verse*, *Good Friday*, and *Aquarius Myself*. Her poem, *Wind and Water*, was illustrated by the renowned artist Julie Dawson, and received critical praise.

Audra was much-loved by her children and grandchildren for her marvelous stories, including the adventures of Snowball the Cat, who unzipped her fur coat in the heat of the summer and many others, collected in the book *Tiny Tim's Lost Roar and Other Stories*. She also wrote *Childsong*, and *Someone Special Has Just Turned Four*.

Cookbooks

With her husband, Audra wrote a health food/cookbook trilogy published by Storey Communications and distributed by Harper and Row. *The Carrot Cookbook* (1987), *Surprising Citrus: A Cookbook* (1988), and *Broccoli and Company* (1989). The books were selected for Better Homes and Gardens Cooking and Crafts Book Club. Danish publications rights to *The Carrot Cookbook* were sold in 1987. *Broccoli and Company* went into its fifth printing.

She also wrote and published the *Family Fare Collection of Cookbooks*, including *Time for Dinner!*, *Appetizers and Drinks*, *Cookies and Cakes*, *Side Dishes*, *Puddings and Pies*, *Salads and Dressings*, *Bread and Breakfast*, *Sweet Things*, and *Soup and Sandwich*.

Humor, Essays, and Genealogy

Audra wrote several books of humor and essays, including *Death on a Roll*, *How Green Was My Gardener*, *Traveling Light* (about a bus tour through Europe), *Un-Familiar Quotations*, and *My Sister Geneve*. Her anthology on crows will be completed by her daughter, Kim.

Audra also wrote *Family Matters!*, a comprehensive genealogy of her maternal line, from the three Mayflower ancestral families to the present. Her exhaustively researched book and index have made enormous contributions to genealogical students everywhere and is much appreciated by her family. She also researched her paternal line genealogy.

Memberships

Audra was a member of MENSA, Society of Mayflower Descendants, Daughters of the American Revolution (Good Citizens Committee chair, Librarian, and Chaplain, Piety Hill Chapter), Descendants of the Founders of Hartford, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals, Women in Communications (scholarship chairman, education co-chairman), the Easter Seal Society, Consumer Educators of Michigan, American Council on Consumer Interests, St. Hugo of the Hills Choir, League of Women Voters/Oakland Area, Birmingham /Bloomfield Art Association, the Choir and Women's Council at Holy Name Parish, the Community House Senior Women's Club (where she was appointed charter publicity chairman, and later elected president) , Birmingham Musicale, the Birmingham branch, American Association of University Women, and St. Ann's Choir, Ashland, Virginia.

Photography

Audra was extraordinarily talented with a camera. Her photographs with a Western motif were exhibited in Carlsbad, CA in 1985. She received Honorable Mention for "Study in Black and White" from the Scarab Club in Detroit in 1978.

Journalism Background

Audra was editor of her high school and junior high school newspapers. She began her writing career at the age of nineteen when she was appointed Women's Editor of *The Daily Herald* in Provo, Utah. Her future husband, Jack, was a reporter on a rival paper, *The Salt Lake Tribune*.

Journalism Career

Audra was editor of *Motel Guest Magazine* in Detroit, Michigan, and cofounder, editor and publisher of *The Epicenter News* in Southfield, Michigan. She launched the *Neighborhood News* on Plainview Road, written, edited, published, and circulated by her children.

Public Relations Career

Audra did public relations work for Gardco, Inc., an automotive research and development firm in Bloomfield Hills, MI, and for StarPak, Inc., a solar energy company in Novi, MI. In 1977 Audra was one of 1500 graduate students selected nationwide to serve as Consumer Affairs interns. Chosen by the Owner Relations Department of Ford Motor Company, her duties included examination and evaluation of owner relations activities of the major automotive companies in the United States.

St. Anthony of the Desert

Audra was a benefactor, co-founder, and charter member of the Catholic Community in Utah's Fremont River Valley, near the northern boundary of Capitol Reef National Park. The last explored area in the contiguous United States, the region was settled by her forebears. Audra donated land there for a chapel dedicated to St. Anthony of the Desert, and with her husband, raised funds and materials for construction costs and furnishings. Bishop William K. Weigand, Roman Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, dedicated the chapel on June 8, 1991.

CCD

Audra organized and served as director of the after-school religious education program at St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, MI. As chief administrator, she recruited, trained, and supervised 150 faculty and auxiliary staff serving nearly 1000 students. Additionally, she was elected charter chairman and served as a leader in the Junior Great Books program at the school.

Energy Series

With her husband, Audra originated and developed *The Energy Scene*, a print series on energy use, alternative sources, conservation, and planning. As "The Energy People", they created, researched, wrote, and broadcast daily energy features on WCAR-AM. They also hosted a weekly half-hour "Energy Scene" interview show on WCAR-AM. They made guest appearances on WXYZ-TV's "A.M. Detroit with Dennis Wholey" show, and on "Kelly and Company". Audra and Jack received United Press International's top award in radio documentary for 1977 in Michigan and were featured in *Michigan Challenge*.

Articles Written

Audra's articles, fiction, poetry, humor, and photographs were published in *Michigan Challenge*, *Extension*, *Jack and Jill*, *The Cranbrook Quarterly*, *Catholic Life*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *Cranbrook Magazine*, *The Weekly Call*, *Detroit Magazine*, *The Macomb Journal*, *Cats Magazine*, *The Birmingham Eccentric*, *Ave Maria*, *Ensign Magazine*, *The Summit Sentinel*, *The National Catholic Reporter*, and others.

Volunteer Work

In the 1950s Audra taught English to newly arrived Hispanics. She also rocked babies at the Sarah Vincent Home for children. She helped to organize the polio vaccine distribution effort at Pitcher Elementary and helped in many capacities at every school her children attended. She was a volunteer co-host of the 1977, 1978, and 1979 Easter Seal Telethons in Southeast Michigan, and served as public relations director in 1980 and 1981.

Recreation

For recreation Audra read, gardened, collected stamps, played the piano and guitar, swam, watched birds, played tennis, walked, skied cross-country, bike-rode, teased crows, solved double acrostics, and re-designed her flower beds.

This amazing and accomplished woman left her mark on her family and the world. She will be loved, honored, and remembered by all who knew her.