

Willard Clayton Smith

September 26, 1953 ~ June 10, 2024

Dear Clayton, Jim, and Florence, I was saddened to hear from Bri J of Willard's passing. From time to time I would receive messages from him and I realize that life took some difficult turns for him. I appreciate the acknowledgement of his interest in history. I have, to this day, an article he wrote about the old Ambassador Hotel and polygamy that was published in the Utah Chronicle. Growing up, he more than anyone else helped me to be interested in history and reading commentaries about gospel subjects (answers to gospel questions by Joseph Fielding Smith). He also started on some stories about Troop 79, but going back to work and some of the financial issues derailed that to some extent. I have so many memories of him because of Church, School, and Scouts. He certainly wasn't the most obedient in class, I cherish the memory of him being him in Sunday School, while you Clayton were teaching, he kept interrupting finally you threw a piece of chalk across the room at him. I believe he calmed down for a short while. That memory helps me when I have had enough of teaching some of the youth. I am trying to remember his role with Seminary at West High, I don't think he was president, but he was in charge of something and would go around speaking, it might have been at our ward or another one, but he adjusted a microphone that was not meant to adjust, he commented on that when he came back and spoke some months later. I remember his call to Japan and then being injured trying to help get a car unstuck. It was a miracle that he healed from that, while he was convalescing I would visit him at your home, I am grateful he did heal and was able to go on a mission. Clayton thank you so much for your work with HJ Grant, Jim I repurposed the window your dad made from the Ensign Ward stained glass, we have a nice window to the side of our entrance, I made some smaller ones for each of my siblings and the remaining amount I gave to my sister Barbara Corry. My thoughts and blessings are with all of you, wish I could be there to give you all a hug. Sincerely, David C. Willis

- David Willis

Our dear Rosemary. Our hearts are breaking for you but we are so glad for the eternal perspective. "Think Celestial." Willard was so blessed to share his life with you, as you were and still are blessed to have him. He will continue to be a great support to you from the other side. Praying for softened and mended hearts at this tender time for your family. We love you so much! Laura and Luis

- Laura and Luis Aguilar

I feel a deep sorrow and a loss to hear of Willard's passing. My deep and sincere condolences to his family. I have not seen or spoken to Willard since leaving the Ensign Ward in about1969, but I have fond memories of him from primary, sunday school and scouting. His passing makes us all poorer. I loved reading the obituary and learning that he had a rich, productive and purposeful life. I love the photo. Even though he has aged he is easily recognized and his youthful playful smile is now one of maturity, wisdom and kindness.

- Rory D Wood

Willard was a fun, immensely likable and loyal friend, growing up! Some of my fondest memories and recollections are of our many hours we spent together playing board games and outside army games against each other throughout the open neighborhood yards. He was always a friend through those young tender years of our youth-hood. Willard, God bless and magnify your Forward Journey. Love ya dear brother!

- Phill Dunn

Please accept my deepest condolences at his passing. He was such a a soft spoken and caring man. I always enjoyed hearing him share his testimony. May God strengthen you with peace and comfort ■■❤■

- Marsha Morrow

My dear friend RossMary. Words cannot express the sadness that I feel for your loss. Please accept my condolences at this time. Carla and I are richer people for having known Willard and having the both of you in our lives. May God continue to bless you and your family.

- Allen and Carla Dodge

I have been thinking a lot about Willard since hearing about his untimely death last week. When growing up I admired him so! My kind older cousin and at times my muse. I was surprised to see that he is four years older than I am. When growing up I always followed him around at Clayton Family events, and some-how I considered him a peer. Now that we are in our sixties, those four years are small, but when I was 8 or 10 or 12 years of age that gap can be large leap. Willard treated me as an equal; he always included me during family events. We spent a lot of time in either my bedroom on Fairview “Avenue, or his up on the Avenues. It was there that he introduced me to serious reading and helped me learn that books can open worlds. He confidently guided my reading choices, showing me which books I ought to read, and why. He got me interested in fiction in general, and eventually in science fiction. He carefully explained to me why science was important and he told me often that “scientists and the businesspeople” had to learn to communicate. We often take relationships “for granted.” I am sorry to say that I let my closeness with Willard slip away, and possibly didn’t work to further nurture our friendship. When I was at the “U” he was always there when I entered the library during the evenings to study, and was often closing-up when I left at closing time, which I remember being 11 PM. It never occurred to me that I eventually would go years, even decades, without seeing him. We communicated with a rare phone call, or an exchange of e-mails. Willard was, for me, a young impressionable boy, many different things: a guide to reading, a font of science knowledge, a guide to education, an encyclopedia of family relationships. Willard and his aunt Anne (our mother’s youngest sister and only living progenitor) collaborated on transcribing our grandfather Albert Clayton’s World War I journal, describing and putting into context our grandfather’s life-threatening injuries. It helped me understand a cranky and frightening figure. Willard was so wise to want to remember him positively. I know that he has worked on many other family treasures as well. After graduating from the U of U in 1982 I ran off to Boston where I have lived for nearly 40 years. I lost contact with Willard, and with many others. As I get older I see how important such relationships are! I

love Willard and I am sad that we won’t have the occasion to catch up now. With him, I will share a hope of a future existence where relationships can be strengthened, and can grow and mature. Thank you, Willard, for your wise and kind patience with me so many years ago!

- Stephen Hardy, a cousin

My heart breaks for you, my friend , since 7th grade! You had a wonderful life with Willard and I know how much you will miss him. I will keep you and his family in my prayers (Catholic) ■■ Love you, Rosemary! ■

- Kathy Kearns

Willard and I were boyhood friends. We were members of troop 79 of the Boy Scouts. Willard was always a kind person. He was helpful and friendly to all his peers.

- Gordon Wood

My sweet cousin Rosemary, so sorry for your loss. Thinking of you always.

- Christine Saxton

I have many wonderful memories of Willard as we grew up just a few houses apart and share the same birthday - he is one year older. I enjoyed years of scouting with Willard. One memory my wife and I have is when Willard chauffeured us on our first date. He was invited to join us on the date but opted rather to provide transportation and join us in playing board games at the end of the date. He constantly welcomed our ward's YSA to his home where he would sponsor fun activities for the group. He was a true friend to all. We had hoped to attend the services but had family conflicts. We offer our sincere condolences to Rosemary and their dear daughters.

- David Grant