Jean-Louis Cattaneo

March 13, 1920 ~ August 1, 2013

Jean-Louis Cattaneo was born in Mozambique to Swiss missionary parents. He spent his early years at the mission station and was then sent to stay with relatives in Switzerland to be educated through high school. He returned to Africa to be near his parents, learned English at Adams College in South Africa and went on for his BA and Masters degrees, with distinction, at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg where he was then appointed as Lecturer in French, the youngest lecturer in the university. He then went to France for his doctorate degrees in language and literature at the Sorbonne, following which he taught for two years at the prestigious Lycee de Saint Germain. In 1957, he returned to South Africa to become the head of the French department at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, a position he held for three decades. Many of those who were fortunate enough to be his students or become his friends maintained contact with him throughout the years. In Grahamstown, he was active in cultural affairs and also in the Presbyterian Church where he was a church elder for more than 30 years.

His promotion of French culture, literature and history was recognized by France and in 1976 he was awarded France's highest cultural distinction when he was made a Knight of the Order of Academic Laurels. He retired from Rhodes University in 1985 and in 1987 he joined his future wife, Donna Switzer, in Washington DC where she was beginning her diplomatic career. They were married in 1989 in Switzerland and he accompanied her to her diplomatic postings in Nigeria, Indonesia, Argentina and South Africa. They traveled widely together and saw much of the world. Jean-Louis spoke six languages and frequently gave French and English lessons to students, including a famous Indonesian pop star. In 2003, Jean-Louis and Donna retired to Salt Lake City, which he thought looked somewhat like Switzerland. They continued to travel to Europe, Canada, Mexico and South Africa and made their final trip to Hawaii in May 2013.

In Utah he was a fan of Ballet West, the Shakespeare Festival and the symphony. Jean-Louis particularly enjoyed his membership in the Salt Lake Committee on Foreign Relations and was devoted to Cottonwood Presbyterian Church and its members. A man of books, his collection filled two full rooms.

Jean-Louis is survived by Donna, his wife of 24 years, his daughters Jacqueline and Nicolette, his son Marc, his sister Antoinette Richard, his grandchildren Tommy, Claire, Emily, Kimberley and Antoine. He was predeceased by his first wife, Patricia. He was also close to his second family, Donna's children Leslie, Greg, Nikki, and Joel and their children. He was a proud and caring father and grandfather, a wonderful husband and companion and maintained lifelong contact with students and friends around the world.

Funeral services will be held at Cottonwood Presbyterian Church, 1580 E Vine Street, Murray, at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, August 7th, 2013. This will be followed by a reception at the church and interment at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. 10600 S., Sandy.