Robert Patrick Rivera

July 21, 1956 ~ April 1, 2015

Dr. Robert P. Rivera, age 58, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 after a 6-month battle with cancer.

Dr. Rivera was born in Silver City, NM to Lupe P. Rivera and was raised by his mother, his grandmother Manuela Peralta, and his sister Norma. He grew up in Lordsburg, NM and spent much of his free time chasing rabbits, dissecting various insects, hunting deer and fishing. He graduated from Lordsburg High School as valedictorian in 1974. Rob became very interested in religion at the age of 16 and studied every religion he could. Eventually, he joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he was 18 years old and later served a two year LDS mission in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Rob spent his freshman year at Brigham Young University, where he met his first wife. They had three children together. He then transferred back to New Mexico State University and completed his bachelor's degree. He attended the University of Utah, School of Medicine and finished his residency in eye surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

He settled in Flagstaff, AZ where he met and married the love of his life, Suzanne with whom he raised three children. Rob was an avid hunter and fly-fisherman. He enjoyed the outdoors, camping and back-packing. Passionate about his children, he filled their lives with joy and humor and led his family to love and serve the Lord. His example of faith in the Lord and His plan, especially as he faced a cruel illness, will linger with all those who knew him. His compassion and service will be missed. He was loved and respected as a friend, colleague, and mentor. His way with words, both in writing and speaking, will be remembered at home and around the world.

After merging his Flagstaff practice with Barnet Dulaney Perkins Eye Center in Phoenix, he began lecturing and traveling the globe. An accomplished and skillful surgeon, he performed tens of thousands of cataract surgeries and pioneered innovative refractive surgeries such as LASIK and ICL (Implantable Collamer Lens) procedures. He was the country's highest volume ICL surgeon and traveled the world training, teaching, and lecturing on this life changing procedure.

Dr. Rivera returned to Utah and joined Hoopes Vision in 2011 where he became the Director of Clinical Research at Hoopes-Rivera Clinical Research Center. His passion for innovation and new technologies led to numerous important clinical trials, including the world's first comparative study of different cataract laser platforms. Dr. Rivera was in the process of testing various corneal inlays for presbyopia (after-40 vision) when he became ill. The papers, presentations, and videos based on his clinical research won several "Best Of' awards at industry conventions around the world. He was truly one of the most respected and gifted eye surgeons in the world. His contributions in this area have already affected millions of patients and will continue to benefit others in the future.

Dr. Rivera is survived by his wife, Suzanne M. Rivera, and his six children: M. Andrew Rivera, Marisa R. Rivera, Daniel J. Rivera, Eliana M. Rivera, Samuel A. Rivera and Anya S. Rivera, as well as many more cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 pm on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2195 E. Pepperwood Dr., Sandy, Utah. There will be a viewing held on Friday evening from 6-8 p.m. at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, Utah and on Saturday from 11:30-12:30 p.m. prior to the services at the church. Online condolences may be shared with the family at www.larkincares.com