William Godbe Gibbs

July 2, 1928 ~ August 23, 2019

On Friday, August 23, 2019, William Godbe Gibbs, our beloved father, grandfather, great grandfather and friend awoke to a new adventure with his beloved wife. Bill was born July 2, 1928, in Salt Lake City, Utah to Lauren Worthen Gibbs and Mary Godbe Gibbs. His life was dedicated to service; to the Lord, his family, his community, his work and playing in the outdoors.

He served a mission to New Zealand where he became ensconced in the Maori culture, becoming fluent in Maori and developing a love for the Maori people that lasted throughout his life. This love not only brought frequent Maori houseguests to the house twice a year for decades of General Conference, but also extended to invitations to many Polynesian people who visited. When Bill served his mission in New Zealand, the government was trying to stamp out the Maori language. Beginning in the late 1990s, they were trying to resurrect it, and Bill, as one of only a few people left fluent in the language, assisted the New Zealand government in developing programs to save it. This program to save the Maori language and culture was so significant that the BBC ran a special on bringing back the Maori language and Bill was featured; it was the number one rated show on the BBC in New Zealand for more than 2 years. He also assisted in the translation of the Temple Ceremony and Book of Mormon into Maori and was instrumental in the establishment of the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii.

Bill had a strong desire to serve his country. After completing his BS, LLB, and JD degrees at the University of Utah and University of Chicago, Champagne-Urbana, he joined the U.S. Airforce as Chief Legal Officer and Acting Base Judge Advocate General stationed at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. After winning 51 straight cases defending airmen, including one against a pilot that intentionally produced a sonic boom by flying several hundred feet above Cedar City, Utah, that cracked nearly every building foundation, the base commander reassigned him as the prosecutor for the base, where he had a similar record.

While serving at Nellis, just outside of Las Vegas, he met the love of his life. Sitting at church one Sunday, he saw Barbara Clark walk into Sacrament Meeting. Upon seeing her, he commented to a fellow officer, that he was going to marry that girl. She didn't have the same impression, and refused to go out with him for a time. However, his faith in that first impression paid off, and they were married a year later in the St. George LDS Temple by her Uncle, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. After Bill\s term in the Service, they moved to Salt Lake where they started their family.

Bill loved the outdoors: skiing, water skiing, river rafting, hiking and hunting. He and his brother Edwin ran the Colorado River from it's headwaters to Mexico, in a two man raft, with friends. When he returned from his mission in New Zealand, he and his brothers wanted a way to stay and play in the outdoors, so they started the Peruvian Lodge at Alta as a way to have a foot in the ski industry and to have a place to stay at Alta. The Peruvian Lodge not only fulfilled that wish, but launched the ski careers of each of his children, who enjoyed skiing with their father into

his 88th year.

Bill always put his family first, but was also ingenious in combining family/church/work and play. He pioneered the Ward Lake Powell trip, combining Church service with one of his favorite playgrounds. On one trip, claiming to be able to navigate by the stars, he set out with a group of scouts at midnight to find a campsite. After failing to locate the campers, he headed back to the marina at Bullfrog at 30 mph with his son on the bow of the boat with a flashlight, only to find that sand bars don't show up and that kids on the bow tend to fly when the boat makes an abrupt stop.

Providing for his family was not just economic. He always made sure his children had, and took advantage of, opportunities and supported them in pursuing their interests. Whether skiing, motorcycle riding, golf, soccer or debate club, he encouraged and taught his children.

Bill believed wholeheartedly in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it guided every facet of his life. Throughout his life he devoted his time, intellect and faith living and teaching it. He was a dedicated Ordinance Worker in the Salt Lake Temple, served in Bishoprics, Hospital Branches and High Counsels, but his true love was teaching the youth. He was young at heart and could relate to them on their level and was an example to them in the way he lived. In his 15+ years teaching the Priests, all but one served an LDS mission.

Bill had a brilliant career as a lawyer. Specializing in Bank, Financial Institutions and Insurance law, not only did he represent numerous banks, savings and loans and insurance companies, but also drafted the legislation that governed them in the State of Utah. He believed that an integral part of his work included serving his community. Among others, he served as Chairman of the Boards of Salt Lake County Fine Arts, Salt Lake Salt Palace Board, Salt Lake Convention & Visitors Bureau, Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition Board, Enterprise Mentors International Board and Kia Ngawari Maori Trust Board [New Zealand].

Bill was always upbeat and positive and took time to mentor and encourage all those with whom he came in contact. He used to say about himself that "he was manic/depressive, without the depressive part." He was self-motivated, independent and persistent, a voracious reader, always trying to better himself and those around him. He tried to read one book a week, but often exceeded that goal. His family knew him as a loving, happy and energetic father, grandfather and great grandfather who would always put them first and support them in their chosen fields and activities. We will truly miss him, his energetic spirit and his always happy demeanor. He was an inspiration to the very end.

Bill is survived by his three children, William C. who married Elizabeth Dowell, who have five children, Whitney (Brad Butler), Lauren (Lars Reber), William, Madeline Eliza (Nate Goldhardt), and Graham; Wendy, who married Cliff Keeler, who have four children, Chelsey (Samuel Bilodeau), Durban (India), Windsor (Laura), and Jaxon; and Brigham; and six great grandchildren.

A celebration of Bill's life will be held in September. Please send your contact information to celebratebill91@gmail.com if you would like to join us.