Walter Alma Romney

February 20, 1939 ~ March 23, 2020

Our dear husband, dad, papa, brother, and friend to many, passed away at home on Monday, March 23, 2020, snuggled up to his eternal companion and surrounded by family. His death was unexpected, as he was discharged on Sunday morning following heart surgery.

Walt was born on February 20, 1939, in Salt Lake City to Lorenzo Clark "L.C." and Alice Voss Romney. He had two sisters and was the oldest of three brothers. Walt lived most of his life in the shadow of Uintah Elementary School, moving a half-block away from his childhood home on Princeton Ave to his house of nearly 50 years in Uintah Circle. He was a lover of Scouting and earned his Eagle Scout, a love he passed on to his own sons. He also passed along his love of music, the trumpet in particular, and the theater. As a boy, he loved camping and fishing at Utah Lake, Lake Mead, and Hebgen Lake with his mom because she would put the worms on the hook. He attended East High School and later graduated from the University of Utah. While attending the U, he met his life-long love, Susan Stringham, while both were working at the City and County building. After a first date to the Villa Theater to see South Pacific, a long three year courtship began which culminated after Walt finally proposed. Walt joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and they then waited another year while he prepared to enter the Temple. Walt and Susan both finished their studies at the U, taking many classes together, including their favorite-- ballroom dancing. He was a pilot and loved to fly, but he loved Susan more.

Walt often said that "Susan is the best thing in my life." The two were married in the Salt Lake Temple by Gordon B. Hinckley on May 25, 1962. Unfortunately, there wasn't much of a honeymoon as Walt was shipped off to Ft. Hood, Texas, having been active in ROTC and later in the Army. He was very patriotic and loved to fly his big flag on the porch whenever he could. After being discharged from the military, Walt and Susan began their professional studies at the University of Oregon School of Dentistry where he studied and Susan taught elementary school. Walt chose Portland, in part, so he could fish on the Willamette River and crab on Tillamook Bay. While there he and Susan made lifelong and enduring friends. When not studying or working, they often played tennis, golf, and, of course, all sorts of card games, bridge being the most important. They spent six years in Portland where Walt also completed a pediatric residency at the University of Oregon. This was the beginning of a successful pediatric dentistry career that spanned decades. Besides being in private practice and taking care of thousands of patients, he was instrumental in establishing the pediatric dental residency program at Primary Children's Hospital and was on staff at Primary for over 50 years, including Chief of Staff for twelve years. In fact, he was "on the schedule" at Primary the day he passed. He simply loved it there, and especially working with the staff and residents. He also had many loyal assistants who worked years for Dr. Romney. He loved his "girls" and they became an important part of his family. Halloween was always special in Uintah Circle, as many lined up, not for candy, but tooth brushes and toothpaste.

"Big Walt" loved much,ÄîhuntingÄî, fishing, golfing, being outside, his garden, eating out (Dee's Burgers, Pagoda, and Kyoto among the favorites), trips to Carlsbad and Sun Valley, playing cards, candy and especially Diet Coke. But, most important, he loved his family, especially his dear wife of 57 years and his four children,ÄîWalt Jr. "Little Walt", Briant "Brino", Eva "Peachy", and Clark. He loved taking his kids along everywhere, especially camping and hunting. He changed all of his kids' diapers in the field and the kids happily tagged along on his various adventures. He taught the kids about birds, nature, geology, and loved to talk about the stars and the constellations. Most important, he taught his children and grandchildren about hard work, service, charity, and to love the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He faithfully served in many church callings and especially loved working with the scouts, Young Men's and Young Women's groups. The neighborhood kids loved scout trips and campouts as he always had the best treats. Important to Walt were the eight years he spent as a counselor or the Branch President of the VA Hospital. There he touched the lives of many veterans, being a true Disciple by helping many with housing, food and clothing long after leaving the hospital.

He loved to travel and his grandkids really loved trips with Memo and Papa. They loved being with "the Papa" in St. George while playing cards, eating, and doing puzzles. Golf was also a treat with Papa, although no practice swings were allowed. Walt was soft spoken, thoughtful, and had a great sense of humor. He loved to laugh and play jokes on the grandkids, often at dinner and to the embarrassment of Susan and the other adults. Most important, he was generous to a fault and a dear friend to many.

Walt is survived by his dear wife, Susan, his baby sister Alice Mattern (John), his children Walt Jr. (Jennifer), Briant (Angie), Peachy (Chris), and Clark (Keri), and sixteen adoring grandchildren.

As a result of the Coronavirus, the family will hold a private graveside service in Salt Lake City on Friday, March 27, 2020. Once the craziness has subsided, a memorial service will be announced. The family requests that since we are unable to hold services at this time, please take a minute to share a memory, thought or picture of Walt and email it to Walt Jr. at war@clydesnow.com.