Roy Ernest Nelson

November 5, 1917 ~ March 18, 2018

Roy Ernest Nelson passed away at home on March 18, 2018, with family members by his side. Roy was born in Williams, Arizona, to Elmer Nelson and Laura Scheck Nelson on November 5, 1917. He was raised in Grand Canyon Village on the south rim of the place that would soon become a National Park and would forever be his true home. His youth was a joyful time that included work as a mule skinner and guide for countless trips to and from Phantom Ranch on the Colorado River, as a motor-coach guide to the reservations and trading posts of the Four Corners region, and occasional service as an under-aged deputy sheriff for Coconino County when the need arose. Because the nearest high school was 150 miles away, Roy attended school in both Long Beach (cut short by the destruction of his boarding house and school by the Long Beach earthquake of 1933) and Prescott, Arizona, where he selected quarters with a view of the San Francisco Peaks, his connection to the Canyon and home.

Upon graduation Roy moved to Boston to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He graduated with business and engineering degrees from the MIT Sloane School of Management. Roy moved to San Francisco where he was assigned to work at the Standard Oil Company of California (now Chevron). Although 225 Bush Street was home, Roy quickly rotated through many assignments throughout California, including the El Segundo refinery in Southern California. Here Roy was introduced to Kathryn Robinson, a native Utahn living in Los Angeles. Roy and Kathryn were married on August 15, 1943, honeymooned on mule-back in the Grand Canyon, and set up their first household on Russian Hill in San Francisco.

After briefly living in the woods of Marin County, Kathryn and Roy moved to Salt Lake City in 1949 when Roy accepted an executive position with the American Gilsonite Company. They eventually settled in Holladay, Utah, where they raised their family and lived very happily together for more than sixty years.

Roy's professional accomplishments were remarkable. He built refineries, he built pipelines, he was a founding innovator of hydraulic hydrocarbon mining, and he built business and personal relationships throughout the world that were truly life-long. He served as President of the American Gilsonite Company from 1961 to 1980, as President of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers (AIME), as President of the Utah Mining Association. He was a resident member of the Alta Club from 1959 until the day of his passing.

Roy managed his affairs with an effortless calm and grace that he carried with him to the end of his life. He is survived by his sister, Margaret Nelson Thune; daughter Ann Nelson Hanniball and son Christopher Nelson; and family members Dean Hanniball,Nancy Nelson, Katherine Hanniball and Peter Nelson; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife Kathryn Robinson Nelson and son Brandon Wyatt Nelson.

Roy was provided tender, skilled, principled care near the end of his life by Liliana Vigo, Adriana Campos, and Emilio Zagarra. Interment will be under the ponderosas beside his wife and near his parents in the Pioneer

Cemetery in Grand Canyon National Park. Family services will be held at that time.