Larkin

David Wayne Despain

November 13, 1919 ~ February 1, 2017

"Older than dirt but still above it" no longer applies to David Wayne Despain, 97, who transferred to a new area on February 1, 2017 peacefully in his sleep. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Alice-Ann and Stephen Shaffer and his son and daughter-in-law, David and Christine Despain, 16 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Wayne was born in Lovell, Wyoming on lucky Friday, the 13th of November, 1919 to Robert Henry Despain and Julia Thomas Despain. He was the youngest of 12 children consisting of eight older brothers and three older sisters. He was raised on the family farm milking cows from the time he was five years old and began the job of topping and pulling sugar beets the year after he began elementary school. He would go to school for a month then stay out a month to help with the beets so his school year was only eight months long.

He attended and graduated from Dixie Junior College. In February of 1942 he was invited by his Uncle Sam to join the Army. He served in the 636 Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company C. He saw combat in Africa, Italy, southern France and Germany.

On August 16, 1944, he was wounded in southern France where he was awarded the Purple Heart. His life was miraculously preserved several times during the war. He was honorably discharged from the Army in September 1945.

Wayne returned to college at the University of Wyoming. He was on the wrestling team and took third place in the conference championships. After graduating, he went to work for the Soil and Water Conservation Service for the Department of Agriculture. His career began in Riverton, Wyoming where he was asked to give a speech on the radio about soil conservation.

He was then transferred to Lyman, Wyoming which enabled him to visit his brother Bert Despain who was living in Evanston, Wyoming at the time. This proved to be very fortuitous for Wayne as Bert introduced him to a young woman in Evanston named Bessie Annie Turner. He finally convinced her to marry him; and they were married Aug 14, 1950 in the Manti Temple in Manti, Utah.

They spent the first five years of their married life in Lyman. While living in Lyman, Wayne and Bessie were both very active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Wayne held seven different callings at the same time while they were in Lyman. At that time, he was a home teacher, a home teaching supervisor, stake financial clerk, one of the stake Seven Presidents of the Seventy, a stake missionary, the secretary to the ward Young Men's presidency, and had some responsibility with the ward Sunday School organization.

They were then transferred to Cody, Wyoming. Their daughter Alice-Ann was born, and they bought their first home, which was built from two train box cars, located on the Powell highway just out of town. Three years later

they had a little boy whom they named David and life was good.

After living in their little home for about 12 years, they checked with Wayne's work to see if there was any possibility of being transferred. He was told there wasn't so they proceeded to build a beautiful rambler home up on the hill in Cody. They enjoyed this home for two years before they were transferred to Star Valley, Wyoming on January 1, 1969.

Here they finished raising their children and Wayne retired from government service after almost 31 years. Wayne and Bessie stayed busy serving in the church and the community for the next 41 years. Wayne's most favorite calling was that of stake missionary to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His testimony never faltered and he always encouraged others to pay their tithing.

Wayne had the gift of being able to make friends with everyone he met. One of his tricks to doing this was offering to give them a foot rub. He became fascinated with foot reflexology after he retired and treated many "patients" during his retirement years in Star Valley. He never charged for his service, but was well paid through baked goods and lasting friendships over the years. Bessie passed in 2010. They had been married for 59 Ω years. After Bessie's death, Wayne sold their house and came to live with David in Taylorsville.

He lived with David and Chris for a year before moving to Rose Park in Salt Lake City to live with his daughter Alice-Ann and her husband Stephen. He loved going for walks in their neighborhood and visiting with people that he met along the way. Wayne was always active in the church throughout his life. Even though it was hard for him to get around and even more difficult to hear, Wayne went to church every Sunday. He showed humor, dignity, and grace in these last years when so many changes took place.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 11, 2017 at the Rose Park Stake Center, west chapel, 760 North 1200 West in Salt Lake City. A viewing will be held in the east Relief Society room at the same location from 6-8 p.m. on Friday evening and again on Saturday morning in the west Relief Society room from 9:00 , 9:45 a.m. prior to the funeral service. Interment will be in the Evanston City Cemetery next to his wife Bessie.

A special thank you to Cindy Steenblik, Laurence Wunderly and Superior Hospice for their tender attention to Wayne

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the LDS Church Humanitarian Fund.