James Mac Parker

March 27, 1933 ~ February 4, 2018

A memorial service for James Mac Parker will be held on Saturday, April 28th at 11 a.m. at the Ensign Stake Center, 135 "A" Street (between 2nd and 3rd Avenues) in Salt Lake City.

A resident of Salt Lake City, Jim passed away in early February at age 84. He was raised on a farm in Hooper, Utah, nurtured by devoted parents, Edwin and Grace Parker, and surrounded by numerous extended family members. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, George Robert Parker; and was buried in a private service in the Whitney (Idaho) Cemetery.

As a young man, Jim served as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Finland. He then served in the U.S. Army, Military Intelligence, for three years. Devotion to his faith, his family and his country were hallmarks of his life.

Jim received degrees from Weber State (associate), Brigham Young University (bachelor\s in political science) in Utah, and did graduate work at American University and George Washington University (government and public administration) in Washington, D.C.

In 1961, in the Salt Lake Temple, he married Beverly Benson, his beloved eternal companion and sweetheart, with the ceremony performed by Beverly\s father, Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They were blessed with four children, and lived in Washington, D.C.; Boise, Idaho; Denver, Colorado; Burke and Springfield, Virginia; and Salt Lake City, Utah.

For 33 years, Jim\s career centered on the U.S. Department of Interior\s Bureau of Land Management (BLM). His final years with BLM included serving as the associate director of the agency in Washington, D.C., and then as Utah state director, managing 22 million acres of land - about 41 percent of the state. In 1994, the Utah Farm Bureau honored him with their Special Service Award, noting the dignity with which he fulfilled his responsibilities, the open door policy he had in listening to all sides of issues, and his utmost fairness. Following retirement from the BLM, Jim continued consulting on land management issues, and served on several boards, including the Sutherland Institute. He also served as president of the Salt Lake Pioneer Chapter of The Sons of Utah Pioneers.

A defining experience for Jim and Beverly and their young family came in 1978, when Jim was called to serve as president of the Finland Helsinki Mission. The country and its people will forever hold a place in the hearts of the Parker family. In 1997, Jim was instrumental in compiling a history of the Church in Finland, titled Muistamme (We Remember). During the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, Jim and Beverly helped organize welcoming events for the president of Finland and Finnish athletes. Later, one of the great joys of their lives was returning to "Suomi" for the dedication of the Finland Helsinki Temple. There, President Gordon B. Hinckley invited Jim to speak in a dedicatory session, representing all mission presidents who had served there.

Jim\s other Church assignments included teacher, quorum and Scout leader, high councilman, counselor in mission presidencies and bishoprics, serving twice as a bishop (Denver and Salt Lake City), and as a temple sealer. In 1974, he was honored to be part of the opening of the Washington, D.C. Temple, serving on the planning committee for the open house and dedication.

The last several years of Jim\s life were spent in the Washington, D.C. area, where he and Beverly had met, courted, lived as newlyweds, and raised their young family. He and Beverly enjoyed reliving sweet memories there, attending the Washington D.C. Temple, and spending time with their growing posterity. He will be forever remembered for his love, kindness, never-ending patience and Christ-like concern for others. His posterity will miss his warm smile and joyful laughter, his delightful marionette shows (which he performed as a boy on a children's television program), his wise counsel and storytelling, and his strong, comforting arms rocking babies to sleep. They are grateful for his faithful and valiant example of a covenant-keeper, and will especially miss observing the tender and loyal marriage relationship between Jim and Beverly.

He is survived by his loving wife, Beverly Benson Parker, and their children, Flora McConkie (Robert), Jim Parker (Tasha), Grace Sorensen (Dan), and Scott Parker (MaurLo); twenty-seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Messages of condolence may be shared at www.larkinmortuary.com.