

Kay Joachim Eckardt

April 20, 1939 ~ June 11, 2020

Kay Joachim Eckardt died of complications from cancer on June 11, 2020. He was born April 20, 1939 in Reinbek, Germany.

Kay was born the youngest of three children to Heinz and Irmgard Eckardt near Hamburg, Germany. Six months after his baptism, Kay learned his family would be leaving their home country of Germany. Kay's family arrived in Salt Lake City in May, 1952.

Kay attended Horace Mann Jr. High, West High, and the University of Utah, graduating in 1959. He entered the Air Force in 1960 and served for three years, retiring with the rank of Captain. He looked back on his service fondly having coached several individuals in their private lives and careers. He won the Outstanding Unit of the Air Force Award for his squadron, and convinced Pentagon officials to change their pay policies for reciprocating engine mechanics.

Following his military service career, he accepted a call to serve as a church missionary in South Brazil. His mission had a profound effect on his life. After completing his two-year mission, he returned to the University of Utah to earn his MBA. He worked for the Hallmark Cards Corporation in Kansas City for a year. He returned to Salt Lake to work for and grow the family business, Eckardt Janitorial Services, which he had helped start at age 17. Looking back, there is no doubt that he had the best customers and the best employees.

His hobby was flying all types of jet fighters. He owned T-33 trainer jets and spent 50 years teaching others to fly and appreciate these planes. Another hobby was to fight the powerful in their corruption against the little guy. He also enjoyed being a leader in the Classic Jet Aircraft Association. Kay enjoyed hiking the Wasatch canyons, skiing the Wasatch slopes, and biking. Kay also loved attending the Utah Symphony and Opera performances with his sister, Heidi. He spent significant time doing genealogy and temple work, especially for his ancestors in Germany, where he traveled many times.

Kay's testimony of Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith, and the Restoration remained strong and unwavering throughout his life and sustained him through difficult times.

He is survived by his older brother, Ronald; sister, Heidi Gardner; nieces, Brenda Hutchinson, Robyn Mendenhall (Michael); nephew, Nelson Gardner (Jill); and was a grandfather-like great uncle to Daniel Hutchinson, Austin Mendenhall, Lincoln Mendenhall, Dillon Kener, Tessa Gardner, Jackson Gardner, Micah Gardner, and Stockton Gardner.

Graveside service will be held on Monday, June 22nd at 10:00 am at Larkin Sunset Lawn on 2350 East 1300 South, Salt Lake City, Utah. In lieu of flowers, please donate in Kay’s name to your favorite charity.