James Ace Roberts

February 8, 1930 ~ March 29, 2017

James Ace Roberts, Sr. (Jim), 87, of Midvale, Utah, passed away Wednesday, March 29th. He was preceded in death by his parents, Asa and Sophia Roberts, and four brothers; Jerry, Hardy, Robert, and Richard, and his grandson, Jared. He is survived by his wife, Marla, children; John, Kathie, Karan, Jim, Krystal, and Karma, grandchildren; Naomi, Arielle, Austin, Marshall, Sophie, Tom, Ryan, Ali, Brandon, Lysette, Brittany, Alicia, Jamie, Corbin, and Shauntel, and great-grandchildren; Dallen, Rory, Elliott, Emmett, Eleanore, Allie Mae, Jerika, Atticus, Etta.

Jim was born on February 8th, 1930 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He lived most of his early years in Price, Utah. Jim served a mission for the LDS Church in the East Texas Mission from 1950 to 1952. Subsequently he served in the U.S. Army in Detroit, Michigan as Radar Tracking Expert from 1952 through 1954.

He attended Carbon Junior College from 1947 to 1949 and University of Utah from 1949 to 1950. He finally graduated from Arizona State in Tempe, Arizona in 1956 with a degree in Chemical Engineering. He taught at Coronado Middle School in Coronado, California and West High School in Salt Lake City, Utah.

He was hired by Thiokol Chemical Company in Brigham City, Utah as a Chemical Engineer. He is listed as one of the patent holders for solid rocket fuel that was used during the beginning of the U.S. Space Program and is still used by NASA today. Later in his career, he worked for ARCO at the Hanford Project in Richland, Washington to construct storage tanks for the atomic waste byproduct from the plutonium reactors. In 1975 he transferred to the financial arm of ARCO in Philadelphia, PA. where he worked until 1978. Several years and a few different jobs later, he finished his career at Hercules Industries as a Chemical Engineer working with the same solid rocket fuel that he developed at Thiokol as it was used in the Space Shuttle program and by the Department of Defense.

In an article published in the Deseret News on October 20th, 1998 Jim is acknowledged as the inventor of "the solid rocket fuel that helped carry John Glenn and six other astronauts into space." Jim and Marla flew to Orlando, Florida and drove to Cape Canaveral for the launch of the Space Shuttle Discovery. He was quoted as saying that the experience of seeing the shuttle launch was "the fulfillment of a lifelong dream."

Jim was married to Margaret Ann McCasland in 1955 in the Mesa Arizona Temple. They lived in Mesa, Arizona, where John was born. They lived in Mesa until Jim graduated from Arizona State and then moved to Coronado Island in California. From there they moved to Salt Lake City, where Kathie was born and then Brigham City where Karan, Jim, Krystal, and Karma were born. They moved to Murray, Utah in 1970; Kennewick, Washington in 1974; and Somerdale, New Jersey in the summer of 1975. Jim and Margaret were divorced in 1978.

Jim met Marla at a Single Adult activity and were married in March of 1981 and later sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. They lived on Military Drive for many years and have lived in Midvale for the last several years.

Jim was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints. He loved missionary work. He was set apart as a Seventy in the early 1970's and was ordained as a High Priest in 1975 when he served on the High Council in the Wilmington Delaware Stake.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the LDS Church Missionary Fund.

Memorial services will be held at the Midvale 1st Ward building, 308 West 6th Avenue, Midvale, Utah on Saturday, April 8th, 2017 at 11 am.