

James Kelly Aldridge

October 31, 1956 ~ July 8, 2020

James Kelly Aldridge, known by most as Kelly, age 63, passed away peacefully in his sleep on July 8, 2020. Kelly was born in Wolf Point, Montana on October 31, 1956, to Harold and Harriett Aldridge (Harder). He was the first of their three children.

A hard-working man of irrepressible humor & energy, Kelly's final years were sadly stolen away by the scourge of early-onset dementia. He will be sorely missed by those who loved him and will remember him the way we knew him best—joyful, loving, generous, and a man on whom you could always rely. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Harriett, & his lovely wife, Diane—the only woman he ever loved. He is survived by his son Timothy (Sarah), his daughter Jennifer (Kyle), and his five grandchildren: Evan, Alexis, Ryan, Isaac, & Alec, several of whom are fortunate enough to bear his likeness in their youth. He is also survived by his sister Diane & brother Joseph, with whom he shared more happy memories than we can say, as well as six nieces & nephews, many cousins, aunts, & uncles.

Kelly grew up in Montana and his heart always remained there. He loved going "home" to visit and always described being flooded with wonderful memories. Kelly graduated from Billing's Senior High School in 1974, at which point he went to work for his father's construction business. In 1979, everything changed—he met his sweetheart and the love of his life, Diane. They were married on June 2, 1979, and had two children, Jennifer (1981) and Timothy (1984). Kelly and Diane raised their children and enjoyed a wonderful life in Billings, Montana until 1992, when they moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. They remained for the rest of their lives, and that is where Jennifer and Tim each make their homes today, having given Kelly the joy of meeting and knowing all five of his grandchildren.

Kelly loved his family, and his family loved him. They were always his top priority, and he did everything in his power to make sure he could be there for them, often at a great personal sacrifice. Second to his family, but a close second were his good friends—with whom he took joy and made memories that will no doubt last those friends forever. But it was in the every-day interactions, not the grand memories, where the bonds between Kelly and his family and friends were cemented. Kelly liked nothing more than to drop by just to say hello or share a good conversation. In short, the man loved people. And people loved Kelly. His joy in the company of others, particularly those he cared about, was infectious.

That infectious energy didn't stop at conversation. It had a physical manifestation as well. Kelly was always a highly active man, as all who knew him will remember, and he soldiered on with that active lifestyle every day until his body and mind would no longer allow it. He loved working out at the gym. He loved to golf and being outdoors. He was an avid sports fan, especially football, and looked forward to football season every year. But even in sports, the

family still trumped all. Which meant there was no one he enjoyed cheering on and supporting more than his son, a talented and prolific hockey player from a young age and up through college at Utah Valley University. The years that Tim played hockey may well have been Kelly's favorite years. He loved everything about it—being at the ice rink coaching and cheering on his son's teams, traveling around the country to games and tournaments (always with the family, Diane, and Jennifer, in tow), and would years later regale anyone who would listen with stories of those times with his family. Kelly believed sports, and youth sports, in particular, were essential to a person's development. Tim played hockey, Jennifer swam and played softball, and Kelly even went so far as to be one of the founders of the Little Guy Football Program and League in Billings, Montana. The league soon became a staple in the Billings community, and Kelly happily presided over it as President for many years. Little Guy Football still runs in Billings to this day and was a source of great pride and fond nostalgia for Kelly throughout his life.

Faith, family, friends, and football—anyone who knew Kelly knew that these were the things that made him light up when he talked, even near the end. And though his life on this earth was cut tragically short, there can be no doubt he lived it to the full. We are poorer for his absence but richer for his memory.

"Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for just a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." – George Bernard Shaw

A viewing will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 2020, at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East 10600 South, Sandy, Utah 84092, with a graveside service to follow at 12:30 p.m