Nephi Allan Prime

August 22, 1958 ~ July 14, 2019

Nephi Allan Prime, aged 60, was born in Patea, Taranaki, New Zealand on August 22, 1958 to Ephraim Jack Prime and Josephine Wawata Taiaroa. Just as the Book of Mormon Prophet Nephi, his namesake, he was the youngest son of the family. Nephi was the tenth of eleven children,Äîfour sisters and seven brothers: Samual, Patricia, Joseph Lewis, John Patrick, Patricia Martha, Maui Karaera (Dalvanius), Timothy Pirikahu, Edward (Eddie) Douglas, Barletta (Barty), and Tangirakau (Elizabeth or Tangi). He was preceded in death by his parents and seven siblings.

Nephi was raised in the township of Patea, made famous by the classic waiata (song) Poi E, until the family moved to the township of Te Hawera (The Place of Fire) in 1971. To close friends and family, Nephi was affectionately known as little boy, FiFy, or Fi Fy Fo Fum. "He was a good, well-behaved little brother, a good listener, a hard worker, always willing to do his and our chores at times, that [were] not of his choice," says Nephi's brother Eddie of his childhood. When Nephi found out what his brothers and sisters had been up to, they discovered he had "a calculated sense of humor, we think to get back at us."

Nephi was a keen and talented sportsman especially at backyard bull rushes and rugby. Like his father, he was musically inclined, singing and playing ukulele and guitar. He overcame early learning challenges when he was schooled at the Church College of New Zealand, the university and later while studying the MƒÅori language.

Nephi was raised as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served a mission in Wellington, New Zealand, where he had the opportunity to baptize his mother.

Nephi was passionate about his MƒÅori culture and intent on keeping MƒÅoritanga traditions alive. He joined the Patea MƒÅori Club and continued his cultural interests when he traveled to university overseas in Hawaii.

Nephi studied at Brigham Young University-Hawaii, working at the MƒÅori Village at the Polynesian Cultural Center. There, in 1987, he first met his future wife, Julia Ross Armstrong Austin. They both danced in the Night Show. Nephi would eventually take a fancy to this American girl with MƒÅori roots. Three years later, in 1990, he received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History.

Nephi returned to New Zealand after college and immersed himself in studying MƒÅori language, becoming fluent in Te Reo. He participated in kapa haka, MƒÅori performing arts, remaining active in the Patea MƒÅori Club and training under MƒÅori academic and politician, Dr. Pita Sharples.

Nephi's interests were varied. He loved learning and spent one year studying law at Waikato University, and another year focused on International Relations in a Master's Program. He was an avid motorcycle enthusiast and rode bikes during his years in New Zealand.

Seventeen years after first meeting in Hawaii, Julia and Nephi reconnected and their romance blossomed. On October 9, 2004, they married in the Salt Lake City Temple in Utah. Nephi was the love of Julia's life--her MƒÅori

warrior and eternal companion. Nephi, in turn, was devoted to his sweetheart and queen, Julia. Nephi and Julia spent their first five years of married life in New Zealand living in Wanganui and Tauranga. They settled in the United States in Utah in 2009. He became heavily involved in Ngati Hiona, a MƒÅori community group in Utah, playing guitar, singing, serving as a spokesman and directing many of their programs.

One of Nephi's ambitions living in Utah was to build a gathering place for MƒÅori in Utah. "Ever since I got here in 1999, from then til now," Nephi said in an interview with MƒÅori TV in New Zealand, "every day, every night, I dream about how to build a marae here in the U. S."

Nephi worked in many positions over the years. Among his favorites was his work as Cultural Director of the Pacific Heritage Academy in Utah where he focused on supporting youth. In New Zealand, he was a Director of MƒÅori Tourism for the Bay of Plenty; led Prison Cultural Intervention Programs and worked as a Project Manager for the Crown Forestry Rental Trust. Most recently, he enjoyed working with his colleagues at OpenGear.

Nephi served faithfully in many church callings from the High Council and bishoprics to delighting in preparing lessons as a teacher.

He loved people and was surrounded by friends who enjoyed his warm smile, his upbeat demeanor and his shaka hand shake from his days in Hawaii. He forged relationships with indigenous communities in Utah and the West, relishing in finding connections with native people.

Nephi enjoyed travel adventures with Julia, recently returning home from a trip abroad to Italy where they visited Venice and the newly dedicated Rome Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Nephi and Julia also loved making their whare (house) that they bought together in Riverton, Utah, a home that reflected their interests, passions and faith.

Although short in stature at five feet six inches tall, Nephi was a giant in his spiritual convictions to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He had the unique ability to merge his faith with his passion and commitment to perpetuating the MƒÅori culture.

Nephi died unexpectedly in his home in Riverton, Utah on July 14, 2019. He will be missed dearly.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 20, 2019 at the Riverton Western Springs Stake Center, 12691 South 3600 West, Riverton, UT. A viewing will be held Friday evening from 6-8 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary Riverton, 3688 West 12600 South, Riverton, UT and Saturday morning from 9-10:30 a.m. prior to the services at the church. Online condolences welcomed at www.larkincares.com.

Check Facebook for recordings of the Memorial Service for Nephi with tributes from his kaumaatua (elders), that were held in his homeland of Aotearoa New Zealand. See also Facebook to read how his friends and family were influenced by their association with him.