

A. Gardner Buchanan

December 26, 1954 ~ April 27, 2021

December 26 is a terrible day for a birthday.

Such was the lifelong lament of Gardner Buchanan, the man with the very worst birthday.

Yet, take a step back in time to 1958 – the day after Christmas, to be exact – and you'd never guess the 4-year-old boy about to extinguish his birthday candles, face alight with wonder, would ever believe he'd gotten the sour end of the deal as far as birthdays go.

There's magic in that little boy's eyes.

Arthur Gardner Buchanan did what few of us can do. He believed in magic.

And for the few of us lucky enough to know him as he really was, he helped us believe in it, too.

Perhaps it was one of Gardner's personal (albeit fictional) heroes, the great Albus Dumbledore, who said it best: "Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic."

Honestly, Dumbledore nailed it. It's through words that those who loved Gardner best can keep a grasp on the magic he believed in during his 66 years of life. Gardner died on April 27, 2021 at his home in Taylorsville, Utah.

Gardner had a great love of golf. He joined the golf team at Belleville Township High School West in Belleville, Illinois and cherished the long summer days of his youth spent working at the St. Clair Country Club Golf Course. He felt at home on the fairway with his handcrafted clubs and kept a list of every state he played in – his goal was to play a round of 18 in all 50.

Gardner kept many lists. He kept lists of his favorite quotes – "If you see someone buying candy, popcorn and a soda at the movies, they are a drug dealer. There is no other explanation for that type of income." – his favorite words – loquacious (tending to talk a great deal), circuitous (a roundabout route), avuncular (relating to an uncle, kind and patient) – even his favorite menu items at Mt. Fuji Sushi – Shrimp roll, Tamago, Tuna Roll, Utah Roll, Cucumber Roll. He kept lists of goals for self-improvement and daily discipleship in a note he titled "Mustard Seed."

Gardner joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1993. He served in various capacities throughout the years, and cherished his time in the Canyon View Ward in Sandy, Utah. He loved serving in the bishopric and in the Young Men's organization in many states.

He was a natural leader. Gard's extensive career in the travel industry took him across the country in various management positions for Ozark Airlines and Worldspan, a section of the Travelport family, to name a few. He was known by many for his genuine sincerity and his razor-sharp sense of humor.

Gardner and his first wife Polly had four children – Emmilie, Cooper, Nate and McKenzie. Gardner kept every Father's Day card he received from the last 33 years. He kept high school musical programs, programs from the sacrament meetings where his granddaughter was blessed. He kept graduation programs and wedding announcements, and handwritten thank-you notes received more than 20 years ago.

Sadly, this kind and tender (rather avuncular) side to him was often shrouded by his struggles with depression. Gardner was a fighter, and battled his illness for decades.

In the final years of his life, he found comfort in one of his greatest delights – Harry Potter. He was re-reading Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (his favorite) at the time of his death.
Perhaps the most prolific list Gardner kept was of Harry Potter trivia: Wendelyn the Weird was mentioned 47 times, tapping the third brick from the left above the dustbin will get you into Diagon Alley, Tom Riddle was born December 31 (assumably another terrible birthday).
As we remember Gardner and mourn his passing, it makes sense that he was able to find joy in the magical world filled with the Hogwarts Castle and the Maurader's Map, Quidditch and Dementors, and an epic triumph over good and evil.
The way his life impacted so many for good, whether in a professional, religious, or personal capacity, mirrors the same age-old battle: light will always prevail against the dark.

Gard believed in magic because he believed in goodness. You saw it in his eyes when he taught his kids to ride a bike; when he played with them in the ball pit at Circus World. You saw it when he finished making a new set of golf clubs, a service he was willing to do for anyone who asked. You saw it in his eyes when he learned a new insight about the scriptures, saw it reignite again when he shared it. Most magical of all was to make him laugh, really laugh. To make him really laugh was to catch him off his guard and watch his face light up with wonder.
Despite the challenges that burdened him – his Dementors, if you will – Gard kept a childlike tenderness about him. He loved his family dearly; his greatest desire was to be better for them. He did his best to stay loyal to both God and family (a true Huflepuff, that Gardner). Yes, sometimes his Dementors overshadowed it. But he never gave up until his Father in Heaven called him back home.
Indeed, though Gardner Buchanan was the man with the very worst birthday, he was still the boy who lived.
Gardner is survived by his first wife, Polly Scott, and former wife, Julie Fraumbauch. He also leaves behind four children, Emmilie (Eric) Whitlock, Cooper, Nate (Allyson), and McKenzie, two grandchildren, Bellamy and Lincoln Whitlock, and twin Buchanan granddaughters expected this summer. He is also survived by his sisters, Marney DeVroom and Carol Buchanan. Gardner was preceded in death by his father, Arthur Sidney Buchanan and mother, Ann Margaret Gardner.

There will be a graveside memorial service at Salt Lake City Cemetery on May 8 at 11 am. Seating is limited so those who attend are encouraged to bring a chair or blanket for the short service. The Salt Lake City Cemetery is currently advising a particular route to get to the graveside service, please review the map included under the program button if planning to attend. Luncheon will follow at Marney DeVroom's home at 1 pm located at 1890 Alla Panna Way in Sandy.
The services were previously recorded and can be viewed here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Se8-Cy3ehVNxEdNF0G5hMiJ2Gks4cUTa50wv-Knd0tfqqEz6JZB0dOST3h7FoDq6.Py