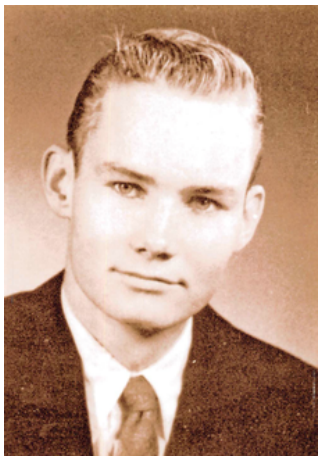

Dr. Jerry Allen Herndon, PhD

January 9, 1939 ~ January 8, 2022

Jerry Allen Herndon of Cedar Valley, Utah passed away on Saturday, January 8, 2022, at Mountain Point Medical Center Hospital in Lehi, Utah. Patricia Allen Herndon, his wife of 61 years, was at his side. Also present were Joanna Williams, Micah Bonnell, and Jason Bonnell.

Jerry Herndon was born in Trigg County, Kentucky on January 9, 1939, to Robert Vernon Herndon and Mary Frances Sholar Herndon. He spent his youth in Kentucky, California, and Texas. Jerry graduated from Trigg County High School in Cadiz, Kentucky in 1958 and later married his high school sweetheart, Patricia Annette Allen, on June 1, 1960, in Hopkinsville, Christian County, Kentucky. Together they raised six children.

Jerry earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1962, with a double major in History and English, at Murray State College in Murray, Kentucky. Awarded a Fellowship in English at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, Jerry earned a Master of Arts Degree in 1964 and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in 1966.

A distinguished academic, Jerry taught for 3 years in the English Department at Brigham Young University. Jerry taught English Composition and American Literature for 31 years at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky where he also curated the Jesse Stuart Collection of Manuscripts, Correspondence, and other related materials for the Forrest C. Pogue Library Special Collections. Jerry and Jesse, a Poet Laureate of Kentucky, were both resolute teachers who sought to inspire their students with a love of learning and life. Jerry was known as a demanding teacher and mentor who imparted wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He taught every student to question and research and communicate through the written word. Always a seeker of truth, Jerry encouraged all those who knew him to find out for themselves the nature of life and eternity.

“I am firm in my belief that a teacher lives on and on through his students. Good teaching is forever, and the teacher is immortal.” -- Jesse Hilton Stuart, Poet Laureate of Kentucky (1954)

Jerry was a founding member of the Jesse Stuart Foundation and a member of its Board of Directors.

Jerry was awarded the commission of Kentucky Colonel by Governor Martha Layne Collins and Secretary of State Drexell R. Davis on August 21, 1984.

Jerry was an author of several books on American Literature as well as an editor of manuscripts for the Jesse Stuart Foundation. He was a man of deep faith who loved God and family above all else. Jerry’s interests included history, literature, the outdoors, and conservation. Jerry also worked for 21 years as an Associate for the Walmart Sporting Goods Department before retiring in 2018.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents Robert and Frances, his siblings Sandra, Kay and Donald, and his daughter Melanie Ann. Jerry is survived by his wife Patricia, his brother Billy (& Nita) of California, brothers Jamie and Nick of Cadiz, Kentucky, and sister Joy, also of Cadiz. His surviving children are Rose Bonnell of Eagle

Mountain, UT; Joel Herndon of Cedar Valley, UT; Jay Herndon of Murray, KY; Joanna (& Chad) Williams of the Bitterroot Valley, MT; Vicky (& Trent) Dalton of Murray, KY; and Susan Hager of Murray, KY. Jerry also leaves behind numerous nieces and nephews, grand-children, and great-grandchildren whom he loved deeply. Papa had many “lambs.”

Jerry was a light to those around him sharing his love of the Lord and the Gospel. A man of hope and vision, Jerry spent his life as a seeker of knowledge and truth. He taught his children to think for themselves and to live with faith, hope, love, and charity. His greatest concern was for the spiritual wellbeing of his ancestors and descendants. He loved deeply and cherished what he earned in this life and sought to ensure the integrity of all he had to offer others in the way of advice and kindness.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.