Willis Savage Whittlesey III

September 18, 1936 ~ October 2, 2017

On October 2, 2017 at the age of 81, Willis Savage Whittlesey III of Holladay, UT bid the people he loved goodbye to embark on his grandest fishing adventure yet.Willis-\"Bill\"-\"Billy\" was born on September 18, 1936 in Torrington, CT, the son of Willis Savage Whittlesey, Jr. and Mary Alice Johnson Whittlesey. He grew up in West Hartford, CT, attended Loomis as a day student, sang as a choir boy in the Episcopal church, and worked several summers sailing the coast of Maine with former president of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company Frazar Wilde. In 1954, Willis graduated from Phillips Academy in Andover, MA where he was class president, played varsity ice hockey and was captain of the baseball team. New Year\s eve, 1954, he took a chance on a blind date with Judith Van Dusen, and they married shortly after his graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1959. One day while Bill and Judy were living in New Hampshire with their two eldest daughters Sarah and Anne, two Mormon missionaries knocked on their door, and together they converted to theChurch of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saintsand have remained devoted members ever since. In 1971, Judy and Bill didn\t see any reason not to move their family to Africa, and so they did-first to South Africa and later Zimbabwe, where their daughters Margaret and Elizabeth were born until they transplanted to Utah in 1979 and have resided ever since.Bill worked for 54 years in a variety of mechanical, instrumentation and process-control engineering positions mainly in the mining, power, water-treatment, chemical, food, and petrochemical industries. His work drew him across the continental U.S. and to places as far-reaching as Siberia, Germany, Alaska, and Canada until he \"retired\" at the age of 74.Bill was a gifted and avid athlete who ran over 45 marathons including the Comrades 56-miler. He played varsity baseball at the Naval Academy and was #1 on the plebe squash team; he played for the Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) National Baseball Team from 1971-1976; he loved racquetball and golf; and even enjoyed a stint caddying for Gary Player\s son, Wayne Player. Bill enjoyed singing in various choirs and choral groups including the University Glee Club of New York City; served as Scoutmaster many times and remained involved with the scouts throughout his life; and he was proud to be a member of the Sons of the American Revolution.Willis worked harder than anyone else and was harder on himself than anyone else. His iconic, gnarled hands built of broken fingers from catching pitches without a mitt, sculpted additionally by other woodworking injuries, epitomized the way he treated most pain with casual disregard. For 19 years he cheerfully shrugged off his diagnosis of chronic lymphocytic leukemia as a mere nuisance. Unpretentious, self-effacing, unflinchingly honest, always up for a joke: Bill was the guy who would drop everything and come and help you if you called. He seemed to contain an endless trove of incredible or humorous stories that might emerge and surprise at any given moment.Bill was a friend to all. There wasn\t a person he would meet with whom he couldn\t find an instant commonality with, be it via last name and possible ancestral relation, your town he\d driven through once, and suddenly you\d find yourself engaged in friendly conversation with someone who was truly interested in you. His heart was almost bigger than this world

could take, extended beyond borders, religious affiliation, generations future and past.The Whittlesey passion for genealogical work trickled through the generations via Bill\s beloved grandfather and via Charles Barney Whittelsey, who was the original compiler of the 1898 and 1941 editions of the Whittlesey-Whittelsey family genealogy and who made an immense impression on him the one time they met. Willis felt an overwhelming call to continue in their footsteps: thus, in 1992 he took it upon himself to compile and publish an updated third edition with the help of his daughter Sarah, and he continued to devote the remainder of his life to compiling, preserving, and connecting with those who had gone before, so that those remaining and those to follow might benefit in perpetuity.Bill believed in one family of man, and to his dying day he expressed this recognition of our common humanity and interconnectedness through the daily charity he offered to whoever crossed his path. Perhaps rivaling only his passion for genealogical work was Bill\s passion for the outdoors: nothing more-blissful could be imagined for him than to find himself standing mid-stream somewhere in the Rockies, say the Bitterroot Valley of Montana-his favorite-patiently casting his hand-tied flies, taking in the beauties of the natural world. He caught and released so many of our hearts, taught so many of us how to fish: that we could master anything with the appropriate amount of elbow grease, practice, and patience. The ripple produced extends outward in a circle, backwards into the past, forward into the future for eternity.He is survived by his wife Judy; daughters Sarah Garcia, Margaret (Bryant) Freer, and Elizabeth; his sisters Jane, Alice (Peter) Duston, and brother Peter; ten grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.A memorial service will be held Saturday October 7th at 11:00 am at the Holladay 28th Ward LDS Chapel at 2625 Milo Way in Holladay, UT. A viewing will be held Friday evening from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the same location as well as at the church on Saturday from 9:30 am to 10:30 am prior to the service.In lieu of flowers, WSW III requests that instead you donate to the LDS Humanitarian Fundor the LDS Perpetual Education Fund, or why not seek out one of your ancestors or ask one of your elders to tell you a story.