

Edward James Fraughton

March 22, 1939 ~ June 2, 2024

Edward James Fraughton was born March 22, 1939, on an early spring day in the snowy, impoverished Utah mining town of Park City. He died at 85 of a rare blood cancer in South Jordan, Utah on June 2, 2024.

He attended Marsac Elementary School and, in 1957, graduated from Park City High School. Entering the University of Utah as a civil engineering student, he later changed his major to sculpture and graduated in 1962 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree. While there, he studied, served as a student teaching assistant, assisted in the gross anatomy lab, and did his postgraduate work under the legendary Dr. Avard T. Fairbanks and his son, Justin. He also played baritone horn in the university marching and concert bands.

Following his formal education, which he financed mainly by working night shifts at a local steel fabrication plant, he struggled to make ends meet by working in sales, substitute high school teaching, driving a delivery truck, and laboring as a foundry worker in a local bronze casting facility.

Ed's first sculpture commission involved creating a series of historical portraits for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1968 he was commissioned by the Sons of Utah Pioneers and Mormon Battalion associations to create a heroic monument commemorating the historic Mormon Battalion trek from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to San Diego during the 1846–1847 Mexican-American War. His heroic 12-foot monumental Mormon Battalion Soldier stands at the highest point in San Diego's Presidio Park.

National recognition began in 1973 when Ed was awarded his first gold medal at the National Academy of Western Art for his sculpture Where Trails End. Awards from the National Sculpture Society, National Academy of Design, and other prestigious art organizations soon followed. In 1980, Ed created the inaugural medal for President Reagan, and his Where Trails End was in Reagan's private quarters during the eight years in office. The same piece is now permanently displayed at the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. Numerous awards followed through the years. Most recently, the National Sculpture Society/National Trust for Historic Preservation's Residency at Chesterwood (June 2023) and a Lifetime Achievement Award was presented (April 2024) by the National Portrait Society of America.

His more recent sculpture projects include A Man to Match My Mountains at Snowbird, Utah Ski Resort, and The Ancient Ones at Mesa Verde National Park, Cortez, Colorado. His portion of a ten-year collaborative effort, commissioned by the First National Bank of Omaha, is in a heroic bronze installation titled Nebraska Wilderness and Pioneer Courage. It depicts a historic pioneer wagon train going west through Nebraska's wilderness.

Edward's greatest source of pride and joy was his family. His love for his wife, his children, and all his posterity was immeasurable. A lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he frequently expressed his devotion to the Savior through his words and his work. His magnum opus, Resurrection, yet to be completed, sits

waiting in his studio.

Surviving him is his wife, Ann; Children: Kristi Chapman (Jeff), Ted (Tina), and Michael (Lisa); and sister, Dona Tippetts. Twelve grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren, many treasured friends and his brothers in the Redwoods. He is preceded in death by his daughter, Amy; granddaughter, Samantha, mother Clara Jane Ackerlund Nelson; father, Ellis Joseph Fraughton; and Step Father, Charles Nelson; his sisters, Ansilene Ozberkmen, Carol Jane Branham, Charlene Nelson, Louise Christie Nelson; and brother, Billy Nelson.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, June 7, 2024, at 11:00 am at Larkin Sunset Gardens (1950 E. Dimple Dell Rd, Sandy, UT 84092). The viewing will be from 9:30 - 10:45 am prior. Interment will be held at Larkin Sunset Gardens. To watch the services live or view the recording, please click the “Watch Services” button above.