

# Edward "Ed" Elder

*January 11, 1954 ~ December 7, 2025*

Edward “Ed” Martin Elder, 71, died peacefully at home in West Jordan, Utah, on December 7, 2025. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was surrounded by loved ones at the time of his passing: Kay, Aaron, Elisha, Kevin, Quinn, and Kiera.

Ed was born to Edward Martin Elder, Jr. and Florence Coletta Merdes Elder in Hialeah, Florida, on January 11,1954. He spent his formative years in Colorado (Grand Junction) and Utah (Roy, Ogden, and Vernal). He graduated from Uintah High School in Vernal in 1972, where he was known for his acting talent. He went on to attend the College of Eastern Utah (now Utah State University Eastern) and College of Southern Utah (now Southern Utah University) on a theatre scholarship. While living in Cedar City, he performed in many plays at the Utah Shakespeare Festival over several years. Ed always recalled his high school and college days as being full of laughter, parties, and good friends. His love for acting led him to Zions National Park and the Uintah Mountains as part of the cast for the movie Jeremiah Johnson, which was his lifelong claim to fame.

In 1977, Ed married Kayleen “Kay” Claar, at the Cathedral of the Madeline Catholic Church in Salt Lake City. They raised two children, Aaron and Elisha, in a home filled with love and support. Ed spent over 20 years at Smith’s Food and Drug as a maintenance technician. Throughout his life, his commitment to the work he did was admirable and he modeled a strong work ethic for all to appreciate. Ed and Kay spent much of their time at Aaron’s football games and Elisha’s dance performances while they were growing up, and supported them in school and student government endeavors. Weekends were spent camping, fishing, and at family picnics and parties. Summer vacations were road trips to Las Vegas, blaring 8-tracks and tapes to the tunes of Earth Wind and Fire, the Doobie Brothers, and the Moody Blues. Ed enjoyed sitting on the back deck of their home in Kearns, looking out at the Wasatch mountains while enjoying a cold beer or glass of whiskey. Ed and Kay loved travelling with friends and their adventures took them many places, including Alaska, Hawaii, and Mexico.

In 1999, Ed and Kay relocated to Chandler, Arizona, where they traded shoveling snow for sunning by the swimming pool. Ed worked for Sylvania Lighting as a lighting technician. He often played host to out of town friends and family coming for vacation, and he worked hard to keep the pool and yard pristine for others to enjoy while he manned the barbeque and poured drinks. Ed attended many Arizona State football games and Diamondbacks baseball games with Kay and Elisha during these years.

In 2014, Ed and Kay relocated back to Utah, living in West Jordan. Although officially retired, Ed couldn’t sit still, and he returned to working at Smith’s in West Jordan part time. Ed’s weekends were spent making pancakes for his granddaughters during sleepovers, taking naps with the dogs, and going to Sam’s Club for a “slice” (pizza). While things slowed down for him the last few years due to complications of Alzheimer’s, his love for these rituals

continued.

Many of our fondest memories of Ed include him hosting poker nights with friends and family, and pool parties to show his love for the sunny Arizona weather. He loved to watch western and comedy movies. He enjoyed the beaches of San Diego and Hawaii, as well as the mountains when the leaves would change in the fall. He found so much joy in watching his granddaughters learn and grow as they explored different dance and sporting activities. He will be remembered for his humor and (often inappropriate) jokes. Ed was truly one of a kind.

Ed is preceded in death by his parents as well as his sister Kathe Young and her husband Richard, who Ed considered a brother and dear friend. He is survived by his wife Kay; their children Aaron (Lori) Poulsen and Elisha (Kevin) Hayes; and their grandchildren Kristina, David, Daniel, Christian, Quinn, and Kiera; as well as beloved relatives living in Arizona, Colorado, and California.

In honoring Ed’s wishes, there will be no formal services. A celebration of life will be announced at a later date. To celebrate Ed, we invite you to raise a glass and share a memory in his honor.

The family would like to thank Serenity Hospice for their kindness and care. We are grateful for their support over the last year, as keeping him comfortable was a priority. He was truly blessed to the very end.