Leonidas Ralph Mecham

April 23, 1928 ~ March 9, 2019

Leonidas Ralph Mecham, passed away at his home on March 9, 2019. His beloved wife and companion of nearly 69 years, Barbara Folsom Mecham, was at his side. Ralph had struggled with conditions related to age for several years.

Ralph was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 23, 1928, to Leonidas DeVon and Minnie Isabella Frame Mecham. Minnie died when Ralph was fifteen-months old. His early years were spent with his father and other family members until DeVon's marriage to Janet Georgiana Frame when Ralph was four, who nurtured him to adulthood.

He attended West High School in Salt Lake City and played varsity basketball in addition to focusing on his studies. At a church gathering in 1947, he met a young lady, Barbara Folsom, who would become his lifelong and eternal partner.

A graduate of the University of Utah, Mecham served a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Great Britain. He and his missionary companions earned the title of British National Champions in 1948 and 1949, and subsequently played teams across the European continent, representing both Great Britain and the Church. He returned and married for time and eternity on August 10, 1950 in the Salt Lake Temple.

After graduation, Ralph and Barbara moved to Washington, D.C., where Mecham began his career in public service and government relations as a legislative assistant and ultimately administrative assistant to Utah U.S. Senator Wallace F. Bennett. While working full-time, becoming the father of four children (a fifth child came later), Mecham attended George Washington University School of Law at night. Eventually, he received the first Congressional fellowship and earned a Masters degree in public administration from Harvard University. His subsequent career included positions as director of the Four Corners Regional Commission, vice president of the University of Utah, vice president of the Anaconda Company, as well as Atlantic Richfield. For 21-years he served as Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, working for three Chief Justices of the Supreme Court.

Mecham served his Church willingly and with devotion. He served a bishop twice, including as bishop of the Potomac Ward in Maryland. He later served as president of the Washington, D.C. Stake, and then served as a regional leader, with responsibility for Latter-day Saint congregations in Pennsylvania and Delaware. His favorite assignment was Sunday school teacher, which brought him back to his home congregation.

Ralph felt his most important calling was as husband and father. Family gave him his ultimate joy and fulfillment. He and Barbara have spent their lives helping their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren appreciate where they came from and feeling the joy of family. He and Barbara crisscrossed the country attending graduations, baptisms, blessings, weddings, and other special events for family members. Ralph was committed to regular, week-long family reunions that insured family members became forever friends.

Ralph is survived by his wife; his brothers, Paul Frame Mecham (Joan), DeVon Frame Mecham (JoAnn) and sister-in-law Ann Dunkley Mecham; his children, Mark Leonidas Mecham (Pat Tomlinson), Meredith Mecham Smith (Bradley Smith), Richard Owen Mecham (Janine Hansen), Stephen Folsom Mecham (Angela Welch), Alison Mecham Bench (Eric Bench); 17 grandchildren; and 29 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brother, Alan Frame Mecham.

A gathering will be held Saturday, April 13 from 11 a.m.,Äî12:30 p.m. at the Twenty Seventh East Ward meetinghouse, 185 P Street Salt Lake City, Utah.

A graveside service will follow at 1:00 PM at Salt Lake City Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made in Ralph's name to the BYU Maxwell Institute.

BYU Maxwell Institute

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