Merlin David Compton

July 22, 1924 ~ November 27, 2014

Merlin David Compton was born in Ogden, Utah, on July 22, 1924, the son of George Albert Compton and Margaret Mattson Compton. He passed away on November 27, 2014 in Salt Lake City at the age of 90.

He grew up in Ogden and graduated from Ogden High School, and began attending Weber Jr. College. His college education was interrupted by World War II where Merlin served his country for three years in the Army Air Force. He was stationed stateside as an airplane instrument mechanic training soldiers in combat units. Following the military, he was called to the Spanish American Mission.

He met Avon Allen, his eternal sweetheart, where they were missionaries in the Spanish American Mission. After they returned, they courted and married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1950. Avon was the love of his life and they were rarely apart. At the time of her death in 2012 they had been married 62 years.

He is a graduate of Weber Jr. College, Brigham Young University, and in 1959 he graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) with his Ph.d. While at UCLA, he spent four summers as a Ranger Naturalist in Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks.

He taught Spanish at UCLA; Adams State College in Colorado; Weber State College, and Brigham Young University, retiring from BYU after teaching for 25 years. As a professor at BYU he directed a Semester Abroad program in Spain and two Study Abroad programs in Mexico.

He and Avon built their dream home in Provo, UT, filling it with the finest of music and great examples of the best of paintings and sculpture. Their gracious home welcomed many friends and neighbors, BYU Spanish Department gatherings, and ward groups to enjoy Avon's famous enchilada dinners.

Merlin traveled to Peru four times as a researcher and lecturer on Ricardo Palma, a Peruvian writer of the 19th and 20th centuries. He published numerous books and articles and delivered many lectures on the life and works of Palma. Merlin was recognized as for his excellence as Palma scholar by several Peruvian universities and the Palma Institute

Through out his life, Merlin was an avid tennis player, winning numerous medals in the Huntsman Senior Games in St. George, Utah.

He loved his service in the LDS Name Extraction Program in St. George, Utah and later in the Family Search Indexing Program in Santaquin and Salt Lake City, Utah. At the time of his death he was proud to share that he had indexed more than 100,000 names!

Merlin loved the gospel and was a faithful member LDS Church. He served two missions: the Spanish American Mission in his younger days, and after his retirement, he and Avon served as missionaries in the St. George Visitors' Center and Historical Sites.

During his life Merlin was called as a bishop, a branch president, a high councilor, member of several bishoprics and he always sang in the ward choir. However, his favorite calling was always teaching.

There is nothing he enjoyed more than teaching. Teaching was his life's career, and what he loved to do most. It didn't matter whether he was teaching in a university Spanish class, in a Gospel Doctrine class or in Family Home Evening; his great joy was in helping his students and family understand and incorporate in their careers and their lives the truths he was teaching.

And, more than anything else he loved his family. Along with Avon, his deepest desire was to raise a family full of integrity and love for others. Their children and extended family were their greatest joy.

He is survived by two sisters, Barbara Eckersley, and Lavon (James) Montgomery; five children: Terry Ann Compton Harward (Byron), Todd Merlin Compton (Laura), Tamara Jane Compton Anderson (Ladd), Timothy George Compton (Virginia) and Tina Louise Compton Willmore (Jerry); 18 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Avon Allen Compton, two brothers Bud Compton and Lane Compton, and two granddaughters Taleah and Tabitha English.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Dec 6, 2014 at 10:00 am at the Ensign Stake Center 135 A Street, Salt Lake City. Visitations will be held Friday, Dec 5 from 7 to 8:30 pm at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E. South Temple and on Monday, Dec 6 from 9 to 9:45 am at the Ensign Stake Center. Interment at 2:30 pm at the Provo City Cemetery, Provo, UT.

In Merlin's memory, the family would welcome donations in lieu of flowers to LDS Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) at LDSP.org. Condolences at Larkinmortuary.org