

Gerd Wolfgang Freimann

August 10, 1933 ~ February 27, 2023

Gerd Wolfgang Freimann, our beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully Monday morning, February 27, 2023, in Salt Lake City, Utah. As always throughout his life, his dear wife Helga was at his side.

Gerd was born August 10, 1933, in Koenigsberg, East Prussia, Germany. His parents were Alfred Ernst Freimann and Charlotte Pokern Freimann. His sister, Sieglinde, was born in 1937.

In 1945, Gerd's family moved to the island of Foehr, in the North Sea, a place he would recall with great fondness for the rest of his life. Then in 1951, Gerd moved with his family to Bielefeld, Germany. In Bielefeld, Gerd had the opportunity to appear as a supernumerary in many operas, which began the love of opera that he maintained and shared with his family throughout his life. Bielefeld is where he first met his wife Helga, at a conference for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, their shared faith.

In 1956, Gerd, along with his parents and sister, immigrated to Salt Lake City, Utah, in the United States. Helga followed, and she married Gerd in the Salt Lake Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1957. Gerd and Helga raised their three children, Regina, Volker, and Corinna, in Salt Lake City.

Gerd built a successful career in quality control and quality assurance, building a reputation for holding to high standards. His career spanned a variety of industries, including industrial laundry equipment at Ajax Presses, diamond drill bits for the drilling industry at Christensen Diamond Products, measurement products for quality control testing at Alameda Gage, and airplane components for the aviation industry at Edo Fiber Science. His skills were highly respected, leading him to head the quality assurance departments at several of the companies where he worked. He was entrusted with traveling to various sites, both in the United States and Germany, to ensure that specifications were properly implemented, to review processes and to oversee establishment of new departments.

Gerd believed in precision and accountability, values he applied to his work, as well as to his church callings throughout his life, in both Germany and the United States. Gerd was a faithful example to his family. He loved to attend the temple with his family and to listen to the words of the prophets and apostles, especially David O. McKay, Neil A. Maxwell, and Thomas S. Monson.

Throughout his life, Gerd loved to travel. Some of his favorite places to visit were San Francisco, Disneyland, Walt Disney World, Hawaii and Scandinavia. He also enjoyed opportunities to revisit Germany, including Foehr. He especially loved Lake Tahoe, a place he first discovered on a bus trip shortly after immigrating to the United States. He returned there with his family, including his wife, children, parents, sister, nieces, nephews, cousins, and (eventually) grandchildren, year after year and decade after decade. He would say that other places he visited were "entertainment," but Lake Tahoe was "vacation."

While his travels took him many places, Gerd always held a special place in his heart for his home city of Koenigsberg, with its beautiful parks and culture. He enjoyed living over a bakery and throughout his life continued searching out good bakeries wherever he went. His daughter Regina and her family still visit a bakery he discovered with them on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. To his granddaughter Celine, he was known affectionately for the “Opa bread” he would bring and share with her at her parents’ house in Sandy, Utah. He liked to say that he could live life without cake, but never without bread.

Gerd loved words, poetry, and storytelling. As a boy in Koenigsberg, he would listen to his grandmother’s stories. As a youth, on the island of Foehr, he told stories of the wild west to his friends, who gathered round him in the barn to listen. Later, he lived in the “wild west,” in Utah, and told his grandchildren bedtime stories about Foehr, about the ebb and flow of the North Sea and of his funny adventures with his friend Simon. He also told stories about the animals he loved on the island: adorable hedgehogs, his rabbit, Nina, and his friend’s horse, Franz, whom he spoiled with sugar cubes and kind words of encouragement as they worked the fields together. Gerd was constantly writing both stories and poems, in both German and English, sometimes as gifts for loved ones on special occasions, sometimes to simply pass the time and entertain himself.

Gerd was an accomplished chess player. He was a longtime member of the Salt Lake City chess club, serving as president for a time. He studied chess books and subscribed to chess magazines all his life. He had the opportunity to play against Bobby Fischer and to meet his chess hero Boris Spassky. Gerd played tournament chess until 2009 and was nationally ranked. His family often came to watch him play in these tournaments, including his granddaughter, Angela, who followed the chess moves so closely she was once invited to update the official chessboard displays. His favorite memories were of sharing chess with his family and of informal, friendly games. To the end of his life, he fondly recalled playing multiple games a night, as a youth on the island of Foehr, with his father Alfred. In December he played simultaneous chess games with his granddaughter Celine and her husband Jake. His grandson Spencer got to play one last game of chess with him, two days before his passing. Quite appropriately, that game was left unfinished, as was a game with his daughter Corinna at Christmas. Those games are waiting for Gerd’s next moves.

Gerd is preceded in death by his parents Alfred and Charlotte; by his sister, Sieglinde; and by his son-in-law, Michael Wall. Gerd is survived by his wife Helga; by his children Regina Wall, Volker Freimann, and Corinna (Robert) Cavanaugh; and by his grandchildren Spencer Wall, Angela Wall, and Celine (Jake) Haynie (née Cavanaugh).

Funeral services will be held on March 11, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at Larkin Sunset Lawn Mortuary, 2350 East 1300 South, Salt Lake City, Utah. Family and friends may also visit from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. prior to the service.

You may also watch a recording of the service online through Zoom using the following linK:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/LM0GKfV84hH2Pq4c1TScHB4Pd1ua4JLRFQlmIIwLQ4h0l22RRbLoLFgq7dDTTGP3.7