



James E. Ford, Ph.D.

November 4, 1943 ~ November 25, 2022

James (Jim) Eric Ford, Ph.D. died peacefully at the home of his eldest daughter on November 25, 2022, at the age of 79.

Jim was born in Los Angeles, CA, to Oma Bertha (Brashears) Ford and Menten Hayward, and they welcomed daughter Janis three years later. Perhaps the most consequential event of Jim's childhood was his family's conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1955, which began his lifelong and unwavering commitment to his religion. Jim spent his early years in the Los Angeles area and attended North High School (graduated 1951), where he began his musical, theatrical, and academic pursuits in earnest. The remainder of his life was informed by a melding of those passions with that of his faith.

Jim received his Bachelor of Arts from Brigham Young University in 1968, his Master of Arts from San Francisco State College in 1972, and his Doctor of Philosophy from the Department of English Language and Literature from the University of Chicago in 1981. He spent most of his career as Associate Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, specializing in the fields of literary criticism and scholarly research. Jim's final years in academia were spent as a Professor in the English department at Brigham Young University. A lifelong teacher, Jim focused on the philosophical foundations of critical theory, with a special interest in intellectual revolutions, as evidenced by his book, *The Ontic Return: The Current Epochal Shift from Meaning to Being* (2012).

Jim married Nancy Ann Tangren in 1973 and together they shared 25 years of marriage, six children, and homes in six cities, until their split in 1997. In 1998, Jim married opera singer Ariel Bybee in Lincoln, NE, where they were able to blend their interests in the creation of dozens of programs combining music and literature, which they performed in scores of venues around the world, thus integrating their third mutual love, travel.

And yet, most important to Jim were the contributions he made as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served a mission in the New England area from 1963 to 1965. Jim continued a faithful devotion throughout his life, a highlight being the 2013-2014 joint mission he and Ariel served in California, of which he said in an email to his children, they left with, "an attitude of genuine love, that Christ loves everyone and that, if he does, then we can, too".

Jim is survived by his sister, Janis Pitzak (Larry) of Indio, CA, as well as his six children: daughter Cimony Mahoney (Joseph), daughter Cambric Ford, son David Ford (Becki), daughter Gillian Helm (Scott), daughter Molly Andersen

(Joseph), and daughter Bryony Gwynn (Bryan). Jim is preceded in death by his wife Ariel Bybee. Jim is also survived by grandchildren Olivia, Jackson, Lucas, Emma, Kylan, Everly, Griffin, Jason, Case, Edison, Austen, Theodore, Rosie, and soon to be baby boy Greyson, in addition to nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, December 9, 2022, at 11:00 am at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E S Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT. Interment will take place at the Salt Lake Cemetery directly following the service. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Jim's honor to the Ariel Bybee Vocal Scholarship in the School of Music at BYU or to Friends of Opera at the School of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

For those unable to attend, services will be streamed via Zoom. Please click on the "Watch Services" link above. A free Zoom account is required and you must be logged in to your Zoom account to view.