

James Gary Peterson

September 27, 1937 ~ February 5, 2022

James Gary Peterson (“Jim”) passed away peacefully in his home on February 5th, 2022, in Salt Lake City. Jim was quiet and reserved with a twinkle in his eye. He was friendly, extremely loving, and strong. He will forever stand as a giant in the eyes of those who loved him.

Jim was born in Provo, UT, to George Austin and Agnes Sessions Peterson on September 27th, 1937. His parents, 7 older sisters, and 1 older brother were all very close and loving. They taught him to be confident, work hard, and learn from his mistakes. He grew up playing games with the other children on the streets of East Provo near the old Maeser School. He loved to hike in Slate Canyon and play baseball with his close friends. He delivered newspapers all over town and worked construction for his brother Alden during summers.

In Junior High, Jim took shop classes and discovered his acumen for creating projects with his skilled hands. He never stopped building. He won 1st place in Sears Industrial Arts Contest for a lamp he made from copper and wood. He built end tables, book shelves, coffee tables, and stained-glass windows. Jim received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Brigham Young University in 1960. He constructed homes, duplexes, hotels, hospitals, museums, manufacturing plants, and giant aircraft (Boeing 777) assembly buildings. He meticulously restored the historic home where his father-in-law was born in the high mountains of Colorado. He retired from the Austin Company as Corporate Vice President and District Manager of the Northwest District. He was the project executive building the Conference Center for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He was managing construction sites with gloves and hard hat on until he was almost 70 years old. He continued to be a mentor – training, teaching, and consulting – until his passing.

Family members will remember his dedication to yearly Christmas gifts. He would hand make puzzles and toys for every child, grandchild, and great-grandchild every year. From custom doll high chairs and doll houses, to wooden trains and sling shots, to clocks and treasure chests, he loved to spend hours in his large basement wood shop creating priceless keepsakes for others.

Jim worked and worked, then went home and worked some more. If you were hauling top soil in a wheel barrow, the only way to stop him from shoveling more onto your load was to start running away with it.

As he aged, Jim developed an essential tremor that made his hands shake uncontrollably. This made it very difficult for him to eat a bowl of soup, but he could still maneuver his scroll saw with great skill. Just watch out if you’re holding the nail to his hammer!

When Jim was 17 years old, he went on the most important blind date of his life with Helen Ruth Gustavson from Springville. They courted for 3 years before getting married in the Salt Lake Temple in August of 1957, then courted for another almost 65 years after. They were as near to a perfect match as you will find on earth. They loved each

other with loyalty and laughter through every stage of life. They moved frequently for Jim's work, living in over 20 different homes in a dozen different states during their marriage. But they did it with light hearts and determination. They loved to play canasta. They searched rocky beaches in the northwest and the shores of the great lakes for agates. They hosted endless parties with parachutes, pinatas, treasure hunts, and croquet for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Helen was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2015. As her health deteriorated, Jim cared for her with loyalty, unfathomable energy, and deep love, even as he grew weaker from his own diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. They were inseparable. He mourned for her every one of the 124 days that they were apart since her passing on October 5, 2021.

Jim loved homemade root beer, black licorice, and 7-up. His favorite restaurant was Texas Roadhouse where he would order a steak and baked potato. He and Helen kept a robust store of snacks and candy in their pantry, cupboards, and shelves with a strict open-door policy. Great grandchildren regularly ruined their appetites in Jim's home and then took a bag home for later. He would stock up on everyone's favorites. If he didn't have what you wanted today, he would have it forever after and there was no turning him down.

Jim loved God in a quiet and private way. He served in a large variety of capacities in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. When he was a Bishop in the Harbour Point Ward in Mukilteo, Washington, he was beloved by the members of his congregation who would often share how touched they were by his soft-spoken prayers. In 2005, he received a calling to serve as Patriarch. He accepted that calling with reverence and gravity. He gave over 300 blessings.

In short, James Gary Peterson was a good man. He lived with integrity and loved fiercely.

He is survived by his children, Alan (Julie), Lisa (Gary), and Carl (Lori). Jim has fourteen grandchildren and twenty-one great-grandchildren.

The family is deeply appreciative to Utah Home Health and Hospice and Homespire for the care and compassion they provided.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, February 12th, at 11 AM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints located at 2522 East 6710 South, Cottonwood Heights, Utah. Viewings will be held at the same location on Friday, February 11th, from 6 to 8 PM, and on Saturday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 AM.

Interment will be at the Evergreen Cemetery in Springville, Utah