

James L. Parkin

June 2, 1939 ~ June 18, 2023

There is a saying, life is good and then you die. It describes my life. I was born June 2, 1939 to good parents, E. Lamar and Mary Ileen Soffe Parkin and grew up mainly in Bountiful, Utah with three sisters, Lou, Bonnie (Ralph Sampson) and Lyn (Dick Pelton). Dad believed in work and found me my first job at age eight and I do not ever remember not having a job after that.

My family has been a joy and inspiration. My wife, Bonnie Rae Dansie and I were married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1963. She is my best friend and my best investment. We were blessed with four sons who were smart enough to marry terrific wives. (Jeffrey L and Jana Winters, Brett D. and Angela Christensen, Matthew J and Ann Howell, and David S and Jennifer Huntsman) Eventually they all relocated to the state of Utah so our 18 grandchildren could bless our lives with their frequent visits and service.

Our family has enjoyed many activities together including hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, tennis, skiing (water and snow) scuba diving, attending plays and musical events and many more. Being a spectator at many plays, musicals, dances, football, wrestling, rugby, basketball and other events have made me a proud father and grandfather.

My membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always been a blessing. My 2½ year mission to Sweden taught me many of life's lessons. Later service included callings such as scoutmaster, teacher in various organizations, bishop, stake president and a highlight, mission president in the England London South mission with my wife and nearly 600 of the best missionaries ever.

I made a group of lifelong friends at Bountiful high school (after also attending Davis high). I joined the US Army Reserve and after graduation went to Fort Ord for active duty. I have shared with my sons and grandchildren many of those experiences.

Academics has occupied much of my time and energy. I graduated from the University of Utah with a B.S. and M.D.. I served as student body president of the medical school, and formed a special bond with the students in my cadaver group. I attended the University of Washington for internship, residency and fellowship with a M.S. degree in Physiology and Biophysics. I returned to the faculty of the Surgery Department of the University of Utah, eventually becoming chair of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, chair of Department of Surgery and Associate Vice President of Health Sciences. In 2010, I was named an outstanding alumnus of the University of Utah School of Medicine.

I became a fellow of the American College of surgeons, FACS. My research was as principal investigator of the cochlear implant project where the team developed one of the early multichannel cochlear implants for the profoundly deaf. I also worked on the application of lasers in surgery. I stayed involved in local and national

professional societies serving as president of the national Association of Academic Departments of Otolaryngology and Society of University Otolaryngologists and Head and Neck Surgeons and was an examiner for years for the board exams for Otolaryngology certification. My surgical practice was also busy and I loved my patients. I prayed for them by name, even silently during surgery. I received inspiration, reassurance and feelings of divine companionship during those times. I enjoyed teaching residents and students. What a rewarding career! I never felt like I was working because I always loved my job.

My career was prematurely ended when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis which became a companion of mine for the rest of my life. Blessings occurred because it did not progress as rapidly as predicted and it taught me many important lessons; some I learned more slowly than others, like patience.

Some would have us believe that science disproves religion and weakens our trust in God; my pursuits in science have been strengthened by my religious beliefs. Faith has provided me with deeply satisfying rewards and a better understanding of the meaning of life. We can communicate with our loving Father in Heaven, experience His love and be trusted to answer someone's prayers.

I believe in and celebrate the living Christ. His life was real, his ministry was love and charity. His love for us is evidenced daily in our lives as we strive to follow Him and live His commandments. We must learn from Him and follow His example and one day we will again join with Him for the eternities.

To those of you writing my obituary, modify this in any way you choose, knowing that someday I might ask you why…

Knowing that we will see Dad again and be asked "why?", we will add a few short lines after his:

Dad was a man of integrity. Firmly committed to his family, Dad taught each of us powerful lessons by example. He was a loyal and faithful husband who instructed his boys to respect their mother and all women, to be fiercely protective of their brothers, to make wise financial decisions, to seek higher education and be a life-long learner, and to value the transformative power of hard work. We enjoyed reading and discussing great books. It made us happy to hear Dad tell friends: "I used to give books to my boys, but now they're giving them to me."

Dad was passionate about his profession. He loved the intellectual challenge of the operating room and meticulously honed his skills to perform intricate head and neck surgeries. Teaching young surgeons to become competent and confident in the operating room gave him great joy. He transformed people's lives by giving them the blessing of hearing. One of our favorite experiences is hearing one of Dad's cochlear ear patients weep as he described hearing his child's voice for the first time. Dad's patients knew he loved them. His colleagues appreciated his intelligence, voice of reason, ability to explain things clearly, and talent for unifying a group.

Dad loved his Heavenly Father and showed that love by answering every call to serve. He especially loved his missionaries, and they loved him. Deeply devoted to His Savior, Dad illuminated the beauty of the redeeming power of Jesus Christ in quiet Christian service and through his true legacy of family love. Through his words and life, Dad taught us to love by following the Savior.

We are so thankful for the honorable legacy Dad left us. We will miss his quick wit, sage counsel and brilliant mind. We will miss the gleam in his eye as he spoke of his beloved "wiffy". We will miss laughing together, traveling together, University of Utah sports, and processing our difficult problems with him. His 18 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, who brought him great joy, will miss listening to his stories and playing Farkle.

Thank you, Dad! We are eternally grateful for your countless sacrifices. We pledge to continue to work hard to make you proud!

Thanks to all of the wonderful people who helped care for our father these last few years: Dr. John Rose, Tevita "David" Makaafi, Aaron Hall, the amazing team at Beehive Homes, Active Hospice and Mike Backman.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 1, 11:00 a.m. in the Parleys 3rd ward at 2615 E. Stringham Ave, Salt Lake City. There will be a visitation at the same location on Friday, June 30, 6:00–8:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 1, 9:30–10:30 a.m. Jim will be interred at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 E 1300 S, SLC. Services will be live-streamed at tinyurl.com/ParkinFuneral

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the James L. Parkin Medical Scholarship which benefits University of Utah medical students. Call the university at 801-581-3720 or send a check to: University of Utah Health, Office of

Advancement, P.O. Box 58006, Salt Lake City, UT 84112. Reference scholarship # MD 22418-40165. Your donation is tax deductible.