Dennis Keith Whisenant

August 14, 1940 ~ January 14, 2018

Dennis Keith Whisenant passed away peacefully on January 14, 2018 from complications related to Alzheimer's disease. He was 77 years old. Keith was born on August 14, 1940 in Houston, Texas to Vernis Carroll and Lillian Jackson Whisenant.He grew up in nearby Galena Park, and frequently shared memories of helping at his dad's grocery store and playing baseball. While Keith was still a young boy, he and some family members converted to the LDS faith, a decision that changed his life. After high school, he attended BYU and served in the Northwestern States Mission. Shortly after returning home, he met and fell in love with Mary Jane Duffin. They were married on May 29, 1963 in the Salt Lake City Temple.

Having come from a modest upbringing, Keith worked hard to achieve success. He graduated from Columbia Law School and the Stern School of Business at NYU. He was the youngest partner at Goodbody and Co, before joining the investment firm Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette. After moving to Utah in 1977, Keith started his consulting firm, Cato Inc. He also owned and operated his own businesses before eventually returning to private equity.

Throughout his life, Keith was active in the LDS Church and held many callings, including bishop of the New Jersey Caldwell ward, and home teacher, where he developed many close and lasting friendships. Perhaps his favorite calling was as scoutmaster in the Monument Park 12th Ward. Although never a scout himself, and not particularly comfortable in a tent, Keith enjoyed scouting and remained in contact with many of his scouts throughout the years.

Keith liked people and wanted to make the world a better place. He worked with Vietnamese refugees, hosted International Visitors, and served in leadership positions for the Salt Lake Community Services Council and the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center. He was particularly passionate about the Ouelessebougou-Utah Alliance, which he co-founded, and where he served for more than 20 years. He loved the people of Mali and visited several times. He had a big heart, and a desire to help those in need.

Until his declining health prevented it, Keith enjoyed hiking in the foothills above Salt Lake City, especially his tried and true loop near Red Butte Garden. It was an ideal retreat for him to exercise, think, and enjoy being outdoors. Even when Alzheimer's had taken so much from him, Keith remained able to walk until the final week of his life.

More than anything else, Keith's family was his priority and source of satisfaction. Keith and Mary Jane relocated to Salt Lake to build a durable family home. Keith enjoyed attending BYU games, Jazz games, and other events with his children, engaging in conversation, and offering them (mostly unsolicited) advice. Keith expected each of his children to set and accomplish ambitious goals, and he was extremely proud of them.Above all, Keith was grateful every single day for his "sweetie" Mary Jane.

Keith is survived by his devoted and loving wife, Mary Jane, and their seven children; Brian (Shannon), Brent (Rachele), Greg (Suzi), Jonathan (Sarah), Ben, Amy Schwartz (Rob), and Kari Howell (David); siblings Vern

(Donna), Doug (Eleanor), and Pam Worthington; and 21 grandchildren: Tristan, Josh, Christian, Camryn, Lauryn, Camille, Sam, Esther, Lia, Ryan, Claire, Mark, Marta, Ethan, Jens, Dylan, Mila, Ava, Maya, Aidan, and Elsa. Preceded in death by his parents.

The family would like to thank Mafi Mahe, and the staff at The Ridge Senior Living for their compassionate care during his final months. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at the Crestview Ward (2795 East Crestview Drive). Friends may call at Larkin Sunset Lawn Mortuary (2350 E 1300 S) from 6:00 , 8:00 on Friday, January 19, or at the Crestview Ward on Saturday at 10:00 prior to the funeral. Burial services will be at the Larkin Sunset Lawn after the funeral. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Ouelessebougou Alliance (www.lifteachother.org).