

# Joel C. Peterson

*May 20, 1947 ~ November 25, 2025*

Joel C. Peterson, visionary business leader, committed educator, and proud father and grandfather, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family at home in Woodside, CA on November 25, 2025. Joel is survived by his wife of over 50 years, their 7 children, 31 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. He leaves behind a legacy of leadership, generosity, and inspiration that touched thousands of students, colleagues, entrepreneurs, and friends around the globe.

## A Childhood Rooted in Family and Work

Born on May 20, 1947 in Ames, Iowa, Joel was the first of five children born to Clinton Erastus Peterson and Marjorie Denise Schofield. He spent his earliest years in a WWII-era Quonset hut, often wearing clothes his mother sewed from his father's old Navy uniforms. When his family moved to East Lansing, Michigan, Joel worked multiple jobs, including as vegetable seller, paperboy, and campus mail courier, graduating from Okemos High School in 1965. During this time, he developed a deep sense of duty to his pioneer progenitors, crediting their values of grit, stoicism and courage with inspiring him to take risks and overcome challenges throughout his life.

These values enabled him to distinguish himself academically. During his time at Brigham Young University, Joel was Student Body President and valedictorian of the College of Social Sciences. After graduating in 1971 and completing his first year at Harvard Business School, he married his college sweetheart, Diana Hulme, in 1972. Over the next two decades, they welcomed 7 children, born in France, Texas and California. Family life was defined by intentionality, with a focus on learning, music, sports, travel, and church and community service.

## A Distinguished Career in Business and Teaching

Joel's professional journey was marked by boldness, integrity and strategic acumen. After graduating from Harvard Business School in 1973, Joel spent 18 years at the Trammell Crow Company, eventually becoming Managing Partner of what was then the world's largest private real estate development firm. In 1995, Joel founded what would become Peterson Partners, an investment firm in Salt Lake City, where he partnered with entrepreneurs, championing their growth and investing in character as much as in the companies themselves. Throughout his career of 50 years, Joel served on more than three dozen public and private boards, including as Chairman of JetBlue Airways for 12 years. Those who worked with him describe him as modest, generous, and approachable.

In parallel, Joel found his calling in education and mentorship. Beginning in 1992, he joined the faculty of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, teaching courses in real estate investment, entrepreneurship, and leadership. He also served as Chairman of the Board of Overseers of the Hoover Institution. During his 30 years at Stanford, he earned recognition for his teaching excellence, receiving both the Distinguished Teaching Award and the Robert K. Jaedicke Silver Apple Award. He became known for his generosity with students, his

open-door policy, and his capacity to listen with full attention.

During this time, he also authored several books, including The 10 Laws of Trust, Entrepreneurial Leadership, and a parenting memoir, Juggling Glass and Rubber Balls. He liked to say that trust was built slowly – one conversation, one moment of truth, one promise delivered at a time. He applied this principle in business, in the classroom, and at home.

A Legacy of Family and Faith

As a lifelong member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints, Joel served in multiple leadership roles, completed a full-time mission in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, and a service mission with Diana in Salt Lake City, and taught various Sunday classes throughout the years.

Joel was a dedicated husband, father, and grandfather. He cherished family travels, talking and laughing around the dinner table, playing card games, and attending his family members' myriad athletic events, performances and concerts. He also enjoyed welcoming students and colleagues alike into his life with genuine interest and care.

He leaves an enduring impact on his family and in the classrooms, board rooms and communities he served. We will miss his presence and strive to carry his legacy forward.

Memorial and Support

In lieu of flowers, please contribute treasured stories, memories, and photos to the following website: https://memorial.joelcpeterson.com/

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 pm MST on Wednesday, December 03, 2025 at the Cottonwood Fifth Ward building (5913 South Highland Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84121). A virtual option will also be available. Visitations will be held on Tuesday, December 02, 2025 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm MST and on Wednesday from 11:30 am to 12:45 pm MST, also at the church.