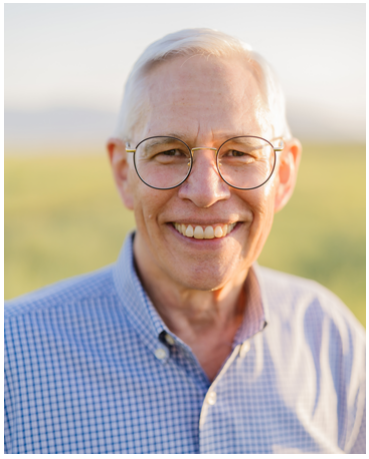


Joel Reed Nelson

September 25, 1956 ~ July 28, 2025

Joel Reed Nelson, 68, passed away on July 28, 2025, at the Huntsman Cancer Institute after a sudden and devastating late-stage cancer diagnosis just weeks earlier.

He was born on September 25, 1956, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Marjorie Yeates and Reed Stender Nelson. He graduated from the University of Utah and later earned an MBA from Lake Superior State University while working in northern Michigan.

In 1984, Joel married Sue Blomquist, and for 41 years they shared a partnership rooted in fierce love, devotion, and adventure. Quiet and reflective, he was the perfect balance to Sue's vibrant and expressive nature. He was always up for her next adventure and returned to their conversations with insight and care. In the final years of their marriage, he made it a personal mission to deepen his kindness, and he did so with quiet, powerful intention.

Joel worked as a professional landman for Shell Oil and later as the Assistant Director of Real Estate and Commercial Services for the Salt Lake City Department of Airports. He loved his job at the airport. When his children heard he wouldn't get the chance to retire, they were heartbroken—until they remembered that if you asked him what he'd want to do in retirement, he'd say, "Work at the airport." He was respected in the business community and deeply valued for his integrity, steadiness, and the relationships he built over decades.

Joel was a devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found deep joy in Christ's atonement as well as the process of learning, repenting, and growing closer to his Savior. He valued humility and had the courage to admit when he was wrong. At one time, "It's the principle of the matter" was a phrase he used often with his children until he came to see that sometimes, being right mattered less than being loving. In letting go of that idea, he made space for even more unconditional love to flourish in his life and home.

For more than a decade, Brother J Dawg served as a Scoutmaster, earning the Silver Beaver Award for his unwavering dedication. His motto, "There's no bad weather, only bad equipment," embodied the way he showed up in life: prepared, dependable, and ready for the next challenge, so much so that he was often found organizing his gear for the next campout as soon as the last one was unpacked and perfectly put away.

Joel adored his children and treasured the partners they brought into the family. His six grandchildren were the joy of his life.

He had a lifelong love of the outdoors, drawn to the rawness of the land, pulled by the sounds and senses of lakes and oceans, the majestic red rock of Southern Utah, and the beauty of our mountains and forests. Joel had an affinity for country music, especially George Strait and Alan Jackson, not just for their songs but for the way they loved their wives and lived their values. Joel curated Spotify playlists with care, creating a soundtrack that matched the rhythms of his days.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Sue; children, Mary Bevan (Spencer), Julie Webb (Scott), John Nelson (Kirsten), and Emily Holmstead (Eric) and his grandchildren, Rose, James, Jack, Penny, Fern, and Lars. He is also survived by his siblings, Ron Nelson (Margaret), Deborah Nelson, and Claudia Watson (Brent).

Joel lived his life to the absolute fullest—quietly, faithfully, and with a beautiful heart.

A celebration of Joel’s life will be held on August 15th and 16th:

A gathering of family, friends, and coworkers will take place on Friday August 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the home of Carol and Steve Knight, located at 3349 Aura Circle, Salt Lake City, Utah. This informal evening will serve in lieu of a traditional viewing.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, August 16th from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, Utah, preceded by an opportunity for those who would like to greet Joel’s family from 10:00 to 10:45 a.m.

All who wish to attend are warmly welcome.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Uplift Community Alliance by clicking on the blue tab above that says "In Lieu of Flowers" or following this link: https://ulcautah.org/

To view a recording of Joel's Celebration of Life, please click on the blue tab above that says "Watch Services".