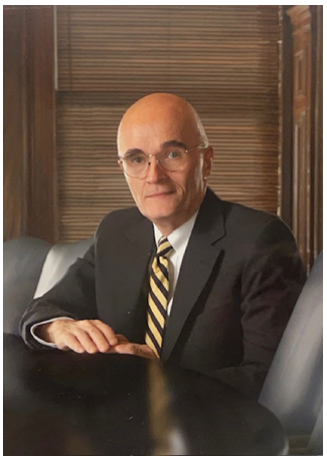

John Eliot Gates

May 3, 1940 ~ May 13, 2025

John Eliot Gates passed away peacefully on May 13th, 2025. John was born May 3rd, 1940, to Violet McCormick and Eliot Young Gates in Salt Lake City, and definitely carried their Scottish genes. At East High School, he learned to love Shakespeare and excelled in debate. He attended the University of Utah where he continued in debate, joined the Sigma Chi fraternity, and made many lifelong friends. He obtained a law degree from the University of Michigan, where he was both a finalist and then a chair for the Campbell Competition. He later acquired a Masters of Law Degree in taxation from New York University Law School.

He was a very hard worker and continued practicing law up until a few days before passing. His close friends and family would lovingly tease him about his devotion to his work and clients, and in fact many of his clients became close friends. He was President of the tax section of the Utah State Bar and particularly enjoyed working with families and business organizations. The majority of his career was spent with Snow Christensen & Martineau.

John’s grandmother taught him to love art. He enjoyed making furniture and collecting art, especially early Utah painters and Native American art, and served on many Salt Lake area art and art museum committees. He also applied his love of art and architecture to the firm’s historic office building, the Newhouse Building, which he managed for 20 years, overseeing remodeling projects and helping amass their collection of over 100 pieces of early Utah art.

In addition to his career, he spent much time actively serving his community. He was active in his LDS church congregation, serving many volunteer positions there, including gospel doctrine teacher, Elders and High Priest quorum leadership positions, and Bishop of his local ward as well as a University student ward. In Salt Lake City, he served as one of the founders and directors of the Downtown Alliance, Chair of the Salt Lake Art Center, Historical Landmarks Committee, Salt Lake Zoning Review Committee, and served as a member of many, many other committees not listed here but including the Executive committee and Board of Governors of the Salt Lake Chambers of Commerce, and the deferred gifting committees of Deseret Foundation, and Holy Cross and Primary Children’s Hospital.

Many who were associated with John often remarked about his substantial integrity and generosity. He enjoyed spending time with friends, especially neighbors and “The Study Group”, whether attending the Shakespeare Festival, spending a weekend in Palm Springs, traveling abroad, or just sharing meals, joys, and sorrows. But no one loved or admired him more than the love of his life, Christena Maria Olson, whom he was married to on August 3rd, 1968, by her father in the Los Angeles Temple. They had a lovely life together, supporting each other in their individual ventures and rearing their children. John’s children and grandchildren appreciate and will always remember his generosity in their behalf, his love of art and music, his wit, and his magnificently large eyebrows.

John is survived by Christena, and their four children: Richard (Cecily) Gates, Ann (Rob) Weaver, Stephen (Alexis) Gates, and Danny (Julia) Gates, 9 grandchildren, and his sister Stephanie Howell.

We would like to thank Dr's B. McCormick, J. Kurtzman, and B. Hamilton for their tender care over the last several years.

Services will be held on Tuesday, May 20th, at 11:00am at the Crestview Ward Chapel at 2795 Crestview Drive, Salt Lake City. A viewing will be held on Monday, May 19th from 6-8pm at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 East 1300 South, and from 9:30-10:45am prior to the funeral at the Crestview Ward.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Backcountry Santa, which benefits Navajo and Hopi people. https://www.backcountrysanta.org/