

Larry Jackstien

August 17, 1942 ~ January 27, 2026

Moments that Matter

Our beloved Larry Grant Jackstien, age 83, passed away on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, from Lewy Body Parkinson's Disease. A loving father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend, Larry's positivity and joy in life revolved around his family and his love of jazz music. Larry taught us through his writings and essays that there were four pillars of life that mattered most to him: Family, Music, Career, and Church. He will be greatly missed by his family and the countless lives he touched during his well-lived life.

Early Life & Education

Larry was born to two loving parents, Grant & Vera Jackstien, in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1942. He enjoyed a "charmed existence" throughout his life, making lasting friends with fellow jazz musicians, Sigma Chi fraternity brothers, co-workers, and neighbors.

Larry attended the University of Utah, studying political science and business. He made lifelong friends at the Sigma Chi house where he would play jazz piano and accompany his "brothers" in song for four years. His Sigma Chi friendships were deep and everlasting. He valued each of them as true brothers and lifelong friends. He finished with an MBA at the University of Utah and began a long and successful career in Marketing & Hospitality Executive Management.

Career & Accomplishments

Larry started in advertising at the Dave Evans Company while also teaching advertising at the University of Utah. Eventually, he concentrated on hotel and resort marketing, holding Executive level positions at the Hotel Utah, Preferred Hotels Worldwide, Hilton Hotel, Deer Valley, and Snowbird. His desire to serve his state and community led him to procure positions on the Utah Travel Council, Salt Lake Convention Board, Bicycle Utah founder, Visitors Bureau Board, and University of Utah Alumni Association. He earned the prestigious Utah Tourism Achievement Award and was instrumental in moving Utah to the forefront of the national tourism industry in the 1990's. A marketer at heart, Larry was consulting and building out "high probability marketing" plans for businesses and destination resorts long into his retirement years.

Music & Mentoring

In his own words, Larry was "obsessed with the music called jazz." It was a significant part of the four pillars of his life.

To Larry, "music was a glorious thing." At an early age he discovered jazz as an art form and became a professional jazz pianist, spending over six decades as a performer, composer, arranger, lecturer and concert producer.

He performed extensively throughout the area and backed up or brought in artists such as Henry Mancini, Nancy Wilson, Elvis Presley, Tony Bennett, Mel Torme, Milt Jackson, George Shearing, Gene Harris, Diana Krall, Clark Terry, Herb Williams, Hank Jones, Monty Alexander, and many other jazz superstars. His popular jazz lecture series was requested throughout the community through radio broadcasts, live performances, and mini concerts to introduce vast numbers of listeners to jazz music.

He started many of Utah's jazz concert series, with most of them still continuing to this day. These include the Deer Valley music festival, Snowbird Jazz & Blues Festival, Hotel Utah concert series, and Jazz at the Hilton concert series. The greatest superstars of jazz were brought in by Larry and his partners, invigorating the jazz landscape in Utah for the last forty years.

Larry also loved to mentor young jazz musicians. Many of Utah's top performing artists today were given their first chances to perform jazz with the Larry Jackstien Group. Young high schoolers and college players were drawn to Larry and his positive influence while developing their abilities, confidence, and skills alongside his jazz trio. He believed in giving young artists a solo stage and he worked closely with university jazz department directors to debut young talent in the jazz industry.

One of Larry's favorite songs was "If I'm Lucky." In Larry's own words written a few years before his passing, *"I was very lucky. Lucky to have had parents who spoiled me with love and opportunity. Lucky to have found my eternal soul mate. Lucky to have four beautiful, handsome, successful children. Lucky to have been surrounded by great, supportive friends. Lucky to have been invited to join Sigma Chi fraternity that led to the strongest brotherhood of great friendships that lasted a lifetime. Lucky to have discovered the joy of all kinds of music, especially jazz. Lucky to have lived a mostly charmed life, ready to embark on the next phase of eternal existence."*

Family & Personal Life

Above all, Larry was a devoted father and husband to his wife and four children. Larry met his sweetheart and wife, Bette Lorene Jackstien, during college on an "accidental" blind date. She was the love of his life and his best friend. Larry and Bette were adventurous travelers throughout their lifetime, spending summers as a young married couple in Europe and Hawaii and visiting cities and countries around the world as a couple or with friends. Because of his hospitality profession perks, they spent many years of their life with their four kids on ski hills, mountain bike trails, beaches and family adventures. Fond family memories were created through their years of travel and adventure together as a family.

Larry was always proud of his four accomplished children: Jinger, James, Jill, and Joshua. He coached their teams, mentored them in music, and spent countless hours at performances, recitals, and sporting events cheering them on. He was a wonderful grandfather to their thirteen grandchildren, spoiling them with love and lots of "grandpa's waffles" regularly.

In his life essays, he wrote that his success in the four pillars of his life were the result of the support and encouragement from his eternal companion, Bette. He felt extremely "blessed" in his family life and was a positive, loving hero to his children and grandchildren.

Church & Military Service

As an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Larry served in several leadership and teaching positions, including a mission in southwest England for two years during college. He was always grateful for the profound insight the doctrines offered of the origin of life and destiny of man in the eternities.

Larry also spent six years in military service to his country. In 1966 he joined the Utah National Guard and was stationed at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. Larry originally wanted to become a pilot but his vision wasn't good enough to be eligible to fly. His six years of service in the Air Force consisted of office logistics, loading, unloading, and transporting cargo in planes bound for Vietnam and other remote locations. Honorably discharged after six years, he retired as a Master Sargeant in 1972.

Larry's Legacy

Larry's life was full of Moments that Matter. He lived his best life and made life better for others. He wanted his funeral to be a Celebration of Life, a remembrance of moments that make life worth living. And a final chance to remind those he loves that life should be full of joy, love and, most of all, music.

Larry is preceded in death by his parents, Grant Albert Jackstien and Vera Lousie Carlson. He is survived by his wife, Bette Lorene Jackstien (Sandy, Utah); his daughter, Jinger Shoemaker (Saratoga Springs, Utah); his son, James Jackstien (Draper, Utah); his daughter, Jill Jackstien Angerbauer (Draper, Utah); his son, Joshua Jackstien (Denver, Colorado); and his sister, Joann Black (San Jose, California).

Service Information

Please join us for a **Celebration of Life Service for Larry Jackstien** on Monday, February 9th at 2:00 pm at Larkin Sunset Gardens in Sandy, Utah on 1950 East Dimple Dell Road.

In Lieu of Flowers

https://bold.org/funds/larry-jackstien-jazz-piano-community-impact-scholarship-fund/

In lieu of flowers, the Jackstien Family is continuing Larry's legacy by forming the **Larry Jackstien Jazz Piano Community Impact Scholarship**. Please donate through the link above to help Larry continue to inspire young jazz pianists to have a positive impact in their communities through music, education, and mentorship--just as Larry did during his lifetime.