



Laurence Ardell Harker, M.D.

Dec. 10, 1932 ~ Oct. 30, 2020

Laurence Ardell Harker, M.D., died Friday, October 30, 2020 of severe pneumonia during his recovery from COVID infection. Right up until the end, he was buoyant, energetic, and active—a well-loved man by all who knew him.

Born the third of six children in 1932, Laurence grew up in Raymond, Alberta, Canada. He quickly distinguished himself as a talented tenor vocalist and brilliant student, winning a scholarship to the University of Alberta to study medicine. After two years at the university, he gave up his scholarship to answer a mission call to Switzerland, despite his mother's reservations and the university's unwillingness to hold his scholarship for him. His mission changed his life, confirming his lifelong commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and awakening a passion for European painting, opera, and culture. His love for God, for the Church, for truth, and for the arts never wavered throughout his life.

When first at the University of Alberta, Laurence met Donna June Parker; she was the choir director for a university chorale group, of which Laurence was a member. While he was on his mission, Donna was baptized, and when he returned, they married in 1958. They built a life of faith, joy, and laughter, soon to be joined by four children: David Lawrence, Peter Burton, Colleen Patricia, and Jaime Lynn.

After returning from his three-year mission, he studied relentlessly to regain admission to the University of Alberta Medical School, and was both readmitted and given another scholarship. Laurence completed medical school, and after an internship in Cardston, Alberta, they moved to Montreal, Quebec for three years of internal medicine residency at McGill. They then moved to Seattle, Washington from Montreal, so Laurence could complete a hematology fellowship at the University of Washington. Because of career and research opportunities, he stayed at the University of Washington for the next 18 years. Laurence and Donna, and their children, became American citizens in 1976. Laurence was a proud American for the rest of his life, and he instilled in his children a love of the United States and a devout commitment to education, faith, and service. He proudly cast his mail-in ballot ten days before his death.

Laurence was a small-town scholarship student from the Alberta prairie who became a world-renowned research hematologist. He worked as a hematologist and researcher at the University of Washington, Scripps Research

Clinic and Foundation, and Emory University. He travelled throughout the world to speak and share his research. He also served the Church in multiple roles, including serving several times as bishop. When he retired, he and Donna were called to preside over the Germany Munich mission from 1999 to 2002. He mentored hundreds of young men and women placed in his care. They always said that this was one of the happiest times of their lives, and they continued to have relationships with former missionaries for decades.

Laurence and Donna retired to Salt Lake City in 2002, after their mission was completed, where they were able to live near their daughter, Colleen. Laurence threw himself into volunteer work and travel, with his customary energy and verve. He volunteered for the LDS Missionary Department four days a week until the end of 2019, driving down to the Church Office Building at 7am as a senior medical reviewer for missionary applicants. He also served as an expert medical consultant for missionaries throughout the world. He loved missionary work so much that he invited newly called missionaries in his home ward, and their entire families, to join him at his home for a steak dinner; he repeated this invitation upon their return. He lost Donna in 2010, and continued to visit children and grandchildren frequently. He truly was a world traveler, having visited Germany, Switzerland, Austria, China, Japan, Australia, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Italy, France, Turkey, Scotland, and England, to name just a few. He also loved to visit the beaches of San Diego. He was a voracious reader and actively participated in his men's book club, comprised of retired medical professionals. His insatiable desire for knowledge and his infectious enthusiasm for life never wavered.

Laurence is survived by his children, David (Gilbert, Arizona), Peter (Irvine, California), Colleen (Salt Lake City), and Jaime (Water Valley, Mississippi), by seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. His family is grateful for the loving service of his many home caregivers, especially his first and most loyal caregiver, Wendy Brooks. We are likewise grateful for the wonderful nurses and doctors who took care of him at the LDS Hospital.

Because of the pandemic, we will not have a conventional viewing or funeral. The family plans to meet to celebrate his life in the near future. We have created a Facebook page, titled "Laurence Harker Memorial and Tribute"; we hope that you will leave favorite memories and photographs of him on that page in tribute to him. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the LDS Church Missionary fund or a charity of your choice.

We feel grateful that Laurence Harker was our father. Though we will miss him terribly, we are grateful that he is now at peace and reunited with our mother.

To share memories, please visit the "Laurence Harker Memorial and Tribute" page on Facebook

A private family graveside will be held at a later date. A virtual service will take place Saturday, November 21, which everyone is invited to participate in.

The registration form for Laurence Harker's virtual memorial is here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6aDXa57U8zp-1OwkdQ5MpNUa8vsQ8yCvJJK7emidInpOHKQ/viewform>

It will start at 11am Mountain time (Salt Lake City), 10 am Pacific (West coast).