

LaVarre Johnson Walter Sr.

October 7, 1927 ~ February 16, 2025

LaVarre Johnson Walter Sr. was born on October 7, 1927, at the Cottonwood Stake Maternity Home in Murray, Utah. He was the third of four children of Clement Edward and Ruby Anne Johnson. He passed away quietly in the early hours of Sunday, February 16, 2025 at the age of 97.

His family lived in a few locations in Salt Lake City, including a couple of stints in the Avenues neighborhood, and in Denver, CO where Clement had earlier moved for his career. LaVarre graduated from Steele Elementary, Morey Junior High and South High, all in Denver. During this time, he also was a member of the Highlander's Boys Organization, playing the trumpet in the group's Military Band and later a member of the ROTC. When he was just 17 years old his father passed away while at work because of heart failure.

In 1944, just shy of ½ credit to graduate from South High as a Junior, he did a concurrent enrollment at Brigham Young University to earn his diploma from South and start his college training at BYU. During his 2nd year at BYU, with the USA at war in WWII he underwent a pre-induction physical exam for military service and was given a deferment until the end of the year for service in the US Army.

Upon advice from his brother, he enrolled in the US Navy and after boot camp was deployed to Pearl Harbor, HI as a Naval Aerographer (Weatherman). With the conclusion of the war, he was honorably discharged in 1947.

The next few years provided the foundation for much of his life to come. In 1947, he first met Fern Elaine Carlow. Upon his discharge from the Navy, he enrolled at the University of Utah in the beginning of 1948. At the end of that year, he was called on a mission to the Western Canadian Mission, where he served until the end of 1950. He had dated Fern prior to leaving on his mission and a year into his own mission, Fern was called to the Eastern Canadian Mission where she served in 1950 and 1951. A year after Fern returned from her mission in December 1952 he proposed and the two were married in the Salt Lake Temple on September 11, 1953. The next June he graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in Chemical Engineering and started working for Mountain Fuel Supply, a natural gas utility and exploration company.

The two had six children, 2 girls and 4 boys. He was always active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fulfilling callings as a Scoutmaster, Bishopric member, member of the stake High Council among others. In Fall 1965 until Spring 1969, while working full-time he enrolled in the University of Utah's Master of Engineering Administration program and graduated with a master's degree.

Fern and LaVarre served a mission in the Quezon City West and San Fernando Missions from May 1990 through November 1991. LaVarre served as a District President.

LaVarre cherished his family deeply. He enjoyed traveling with his wife, Fern. He made it a priority to attend and be present for all of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren's significant life events. He would send them

all birthday, Valentine, Easter, 4th of July, Halloweeen and Christmas cards. Notably, all missionaries received weekly letters from their Grandpa.

At age 87, he invented a derivative version of Sudoku called Sukocross and ran a successful Kickstarter Campaign selling out his initial book of puzzles.

He was pleasant and thoughtful throughout his life. He had an incredible memory and knew by name and association all of 135 descendants and their spouses. He made formative decisions in his 20’s and stuck with them for a distinguished life of devotion to God, love of family, and respect and service for others.

He was preceded in death by his wife and soulmate: Fern Carlow, his parents: Clement Edward and Ruby Anne Johnson, sister Betty Mae Huish (Lamar Huish) and his brothers Garth (Thelma) and Keith (Jackie), daughter-in-law Gwen Smith Walter (first wife of Steven Walter), granddaughter, Emily Walter, Great Granddaughters Mara Adams, Everly Fern Walter, and Esther Fern Walter.

He is survived by his sister-in-law: Carolyn Carlow and close friend Sheryl Boehme. He is also survived by his 6 children and spouses: Cindy (Mike) Goleman, Trina (Jay) Bair, LaVarre Jr (Sharon), Brent (Marilyn), Steven (Becky), Mark (Jill), 27 Grandchildren and 68 Great Grandchildren and three on the way.

Special thanks to the professionals at Sunrise of Sandy Assisted Living and Inspiration Hospice. Much care and devotion was provided to both Fern and LaVarre over many months. Inspiration Hospice has been extremely attentive to LaVarre over the past few months and we express our appreciation to all involved.

There will be a viewing Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 pm at the church building at 10312 Ashley Park Drive, Sandy, Utah. Funeral services will be held at the same location and same day immediately following at 1:00 p.m. Interment to follow services at Holladay Memorial Cemetery, 4900 South Memory Lane, Holladay, Utah.