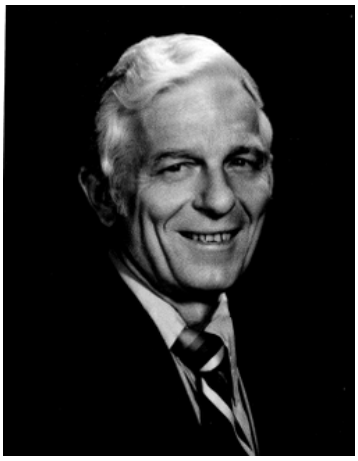

Lawrence Stevens

June 27, 1928 ~ July 21, 2023

Lawrence Elbert Stevens passed away peacefully on the evening of July 21, 2023, at the age of 95, following an afternoon with his six children. Larry was born on June 27, 1928, in Holden, Utah, to William Elbert and Elizabeth Bishop Stevens.

He graduated from Millard High School in 1946. He attended the University of Utah, earned a scholarship on the wrestling team, and graduated with a degree in biologic sciences in 1950.

He received his MD from the University of Utah College of Medicine in 1952 and completed his internship in 1953. He joined the US Air Force and served from 1954-1956 as a Captain, Chief of Surgery at the Ellsworth Air Force Base Hospital in Rapid City, South Dakota. Returning from South Dakota to Salt Lake City, he completed his general surgery residency at the University of Utah in 1960.

On June 23, 1952, he married Virginia Bird, of Kanosh, Utah, in the LDS Manti Temple. Together they raised six children, living in Rapid City, South Dakota, Tenafly, New Jersey, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dr. Larry Stevens enjoyed a remarkable career as a general surgeon and transplant surgeon. While Larry was working at the University of Utah, he and his team performed the first kidney transplant in the state of Utah in 1965. In 1971, he and Virginia moved their family to Tenafly, New Jersey, and Larry took a position in Manhattan at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. Following his return to Salt Lake City, and while working at LDS Hospital, Larry led the team which performed the first liver transplant in Utah in 1984. He developed and led transplant and organ recovery programs at the University of Utah, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and at LDS Hospital. He served as Chief of the Department of Surgery at LDS Hospital from 1985 to 1993. As a surgeon, he had a disciplined, focused, patient-first approach. He helped educate and inspire hundreds of medical students and surgical residents. His reputation was rock-solid. Integrity, courage and intellectual honesty were his hallmarks. Most importantly, he demonstrated respect for every person he interacted with and was known and admired as a gentleman surgeon.

Larry and Virginia served three missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They served in Little Rock, Arkansas, as Mission President and wife, followed by a mission to Sophia, Bulgaria, and then in the Salt Lake Temple Square Mission. He and Virginia also served as temple workers in the Salt Lake Temple.

Larry was a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. He loved others and served with strength and sensitivity. When interacting with others, he was down-to-earth, personable, and respectful. He touched many lives in an inspiring and positive way. His testimony of, and devotion to, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was evident in his daily walk and in his life decisions.

He was a fun, encouraging and wonderful father and grandfather. He loved (and taught others to love) snow skiing, golfing, surfing, fishing, water skiing and gardening. And he loved dancing with Virginia. He could rope cattle, wrangle grandkids, ski the moguls and grow prize-winning dahlias. He loved life to the fullest and, even in the recent tough years, was never heard to repine. He loved Virginia and it is likely that they are again laughing and dancing together.

Larry was preceded in death by his beloved wife and eternal sweetheart Virginia, parents Elbert and Elizabeth Stevens, sisters Bonnie Cripps and Rayma Burgoyne, and son-in-law Gary Bryner. He is survived by his children – Mark (Marilyn) Stevens, Jane Bryner, Scott (Laurie) Stevens, Carolyn (Kurt Frankenburg) Stevens, David Stevens, and Nancy Stevens. He is also survived by his sisters, Norma Wood and Faris Stevens, as well as 15 grandchildren and a passel of great-grandchildren.

Larry's family would like to express thanks to his caregivers at The Haven at Millcreek and deep appreciation to the private caregivers who attended and cared for him these past years.

His funeral service will be held Monday, July 31, 2023, at 11:00 AM at the LDS Crestview Chapel, located at 2795 Crestview Drive in Salt Lake City. Viewings will be held at the Larkin Sunset Lawn Mortuary, 2350 East 1300 South in Salt Lake City, from 6:00-8:00 PM the evening of Sunday, July 30, and also on Monday morning at the Crestview Chapel from 9:30-10:30 AM, prior to the funeral service. Interment to take place at Kanosh City Cemetery on Monday.

Dad, Grandpa, Larry – we are grateful for you and will miss you!