William Hayes Pingree

May 27, 1947 ~ June 30, 2018

William Hayes Pingree Jr., or Bill to his close friends and family, was born on May 27, 1947 to William Hayes Pingree and Helen Loraine Rich in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the first of four children. Bill lived a life full of accomplishment, he was a brilliant man whose influence as a father, friend, professor, mentor, teacher, advocate, scholar and disciple is truly beyond measure. As a young man, Bill had an insatiable curiosity. His fascination with the natural world, birds in particular, led him to the study of ornithology. As a teenager, he kept a pet red-tailed hawk in his backyard, and even did field work with Dr. Behle at the University of Utah long before he graduated from East High School. While he would move on to other pursuits, Bill retained a portion of his naturalist spirit throughout his entire life. Bill served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hamburg, Germany, where he developed a deep love for the German people and became fascinated with the cultural, philosophical, and political dimensions of Germany's history. After his return, a serendipitous encounter with Apostle Mark E. Petersen led to a lifelong friendship. Bill once called Elder Petersen "one of my dearest friends, a confidant, and mentor," and the two would spend countless hours discussing the finer points of Mormon doctrine. Bill fell in love with Rose Anne Schmidt, a piano prodigy and daughter of German immigrants Werner and Lieselotte Pruess Schmidt who fled their home country after World War II. Bill and Rose got married on May 18th 1977 and had two children, Mark and Jennifer. Rose was a talented concert pianist who lovingly raised their children until her tragic and untimely death in 1985. This momentous event was exceptionally hard on Bill as he was not prepared to raise two children without a mother. In his own words, Rose was a "miracle, the crown jewel in my life."

Bill was a man of diverse interests with accomplishments in many domains of life. Upon completing his Master's of Business Administration degree from the University of Utah, which included a consortium with Harvard University, he began his professional career by becoming a member of the Committee to Elect Ronald Reagan President in 1976. At this time, Bill was a member of the Domestic Affairs Caucus, the Vice Chairman of the Western Region and an assistant advisor to the National Security Council. Reagan lost the '76 campaign and Bill took the opportunity to successfully co-manage the senate campaign of Orrin Hatch, who remained a dear personal friend throughout his life. Bill would take only a short break from politics to work at Commercial Security Bank as a general consultant and commercial loan officer until 1980 when he returned to work on Reagan's successful presidential campaign. During this time, he worked in Washington and was involved in the international summits with Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland; Geneva, Switzerland; and Berlin, Germany.

Upon his return to Salt Lake City, Bill formed the Northwest Atlantic Corporation, an organization specializing in restoring historic buildings into adaptive reuse projects, providing housing to low-income earners. With Northwest Atlantic, Bill contributed to the renovation of buildings that would serve as urban renewal centerpieces throughout the Northwest and in downtown Salt Lake City where he was honored to cut the ribbon on the renovated New

Grand Hotel.

Despite his success, Bill was something of a fish out of water in the business world. For those who knew him best, Bill was not a businessman, but a teacher and a mentor, an intellectual and spiritual advisor. Serving as an elders quorum president after his mission, he quickly gained a reputation as an inspiring Sunday school instructor, offering profound insights on deep doctrinal and philosophical questions. Continuing these conversations, Bill would eventually form what became known as the "Underground Elders," an ambitious missionary preparation group some have compared to Robin Williams' famous performance in Dead Poets Society. Following in his mentor Elder Peterson's footsteps, Bill provided guidance to hundreds of young men over the course of many years, challenging them to expand their spiritual and intellectual horizons and encouraging them to ground their faith by living a more authentic, examined life. Bill's influence today extends beyond the grave in the success of these young men.

Following his true passion for teaching, and living up to his true calling, Bill eventually returned to the University of Utah to complete his PhD in political science, specializing in international relations, European history and political philosophy. He taught classes at the U for over fifteen years in philosophy, history and political science while also teaching courses at the LDS Institute of Religion. During his tenure, Bill received multiple teaching awards including the ASUU Professor of Choice award in 2010. His influence can still be felt in his students who speak with reverence of his courses even to this day, a testament to his profound impact as a teacher.

In 2012, Bill retired to focus on his writing. He was prolific during his last six years, publishing multiple articles, essays and books including A Twenty-something's Guide to Spirituality; a reflection on the death of his wife titled My Immortal Beloved; the first volume of his three-part Letters to Missionaries; and most recently, a volume in the monumental series for young disciples entitled Spiritual Lessons for a Young Disciple: The Power of Faith. He leaves behind a corpus of unfinished work, including manuscripts for a series of books called "The Intimate Atonement" and what he referred to as his forthcoming magnum opus, a theological treatise he called "The Great Irony." A true lover of wisdom, Bill's writing stages a conversation between Mormon prophets and theologians, and philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and others. Synthesizing these influences, Bill encouraged a return to eternal, metaphysical concepts in hopes that young disciples and thinkers alike would be brought to a more enlightened and authentic spirituality in their daily lives.

Bill was a towering character, an intellectual and spiritual giant who loved his family, friends and students with all his heart. His sharp intellect must be remembered alongside his warm personality. Those who knew him well will miss his hearty laugh, his passion for life and his deep capacity for empathy with others. Bill passed away on June 30th, 2018. He is survived by his children Mark and Jenny, Jenny's husband Peter Baxter and their three children, Abigail, Adam and James, as well as his surrogate son, Alan Monsen who remained loyal to Bill for the last 16 years of his life. He is also survived by his sister Peggy and his brother Bob. Bill is truly an irreplaceable figure who will be dearly missed.

A viewing for Bill will be held on Sunday, July 8th from 6:00 to 8:00pm at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, Utah 84092. Funeral services will be held Monday, July 9th at 11:00am at the Holladay North Stake Center, 4395 South Albright Drive (2145 East), Holladay, Utah 84124, with a viewing at 10:00am prior to the funeral.