

Dr. LeRoy Samuel Wirthlin

April 11, 1935 ~ September 12, 2024

Our beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend, Dr. LeRoy Samuel Wirthlin, peacefully passed away in his home on Thursday, September 12, 2024.

Roy was born on April 11, 1935, in New York City to Emilie Stiefel and LeRoy Alvin Wirthlin. Roy was the oldest of their four children and spoke fondly of childhood memories with his siblings, Ralph, Barbara, and Alvin. At a very young age Roy began leading his siblings while comfortably navigating and exploring through New York City's sites and museums. He also led them on outdoor adventures and hunting small animals during the summers spent on their remote and primitive farm in Upstate New York. Roy began his first job delivering prescription medication on his bicycle all over Queens at the age of 11. He learned how to work hard and the value of the dollar, buying all of his personal items from that time forward.

Roy loved and honored his parents throughout his life. His mother converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Switzerland and immigrated to America. Her faith had a profound impact on him. She was a gifted artisan in needlepoint and a professional seamstress who taught Roy the art of hand stitching. His father was a surgeon with an office attached to their home in Flushings, NY. Roy always wanted to be just like his father as he watched his father make house calls with his black doctor bag in his Model T-Ford. As the son of a doctor and a seamstress, Roy fulfilled his childhood dream and later became a talented surgeon. He did not take for granted the sacrifices of his parents and forbears that paved the way for a life of faith, hard work, family, and service.

While in high school, Roy's family moved from Queens, NY, to a farm in Taylorsville, UT. He excelled academically at Granite High School and was admitted at age 15 to the University of Utah as part of the university's Ford Scholars program. His life achievements were recognized by his high school alma mater when he officially received his high school diploma and was inducted into the Granite High School Hall of Fame in 1993.

Roy had a deep faith in God and in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As a young adult, he served a 3-year mission to the Swiss Austria Mission. During this mission, he saw two women in an open market who sounded and acted like his mother. He met them and they said, "This must be Emilie's boy." He expressed gratitude that he miraculously had met two of his living aunts and later other relatives on his mission. He loved preaching the gospel in German. He continued to have an abiding interest in his Swiss heritage and Germanic culture.

Roy met the love of his life, Mary Louise McEntire, a fellow student at the University of Utah. He recalled seeing her on campus. He was going up the steps and she was laughing with friends coming down the steps. In his mind he heard, "You are looking at your wife." The feeling was so powerful that his knees buckled requiring him to grab the handrail. During their courtship when he proposed marriage, Mary only had two small requests – "16 children and a large house." They were married for time and all eternity in the Logan temple on July 7, 1960. Over the next 24

years Roy and Mary welcomed a bonus 17 children into their family. He took great pride in his tireless efforts to lead and provide for his large family.

In his profession, Roy went on to study medicine at Harvard Medical School where he became a skilled surgeon, learning from his friend and mentor Dr. Robert Linton, who was a pioneer in the evolving field of vascular surgery. While working as teaching faculty at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Roy also took the opportunity to do a service surgical rotation in Africa. Despite the long hours and rustic outdoor conditions, he later recalled that this was some of the most satisfying work in his medical career. He left Africa humbled by the sincere gratitude of the patients and continued to have an enduring love for Africa the rest of his life.

At the height of the Vietnam War, Roy left his Harvard position to serve his country as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy stationed in Pensacola, FL. He provided medical care as a flight surgeon, conducted research on high-altitude physiology, and published several scientific papers. Roy joined the Naval pistol team and was an excellent marksman. Roy loved his country and the raising and lowering of the American flag each day.

Roy and Mary moved back to Boston where they had a full and busy life with 5 kids and growing family. He worked as academic faculty at Harvard Medical School providing clinical services and participating in medical research while simultaneously serving as an LDS Bishop. Miraculously though, there was a period of time where Roy was less busy at the hospital and was able to meticulously document the efforts of the renowned frontier surgeon Nathan Smith, who was the surgeon who treated and saved the young prophet Joseph Smith's leg from amputation. Roy felt that this original research and its contribution to history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was his greatest academic achievement.

To focus more on their family of now 11 children, Roy and Mary moved from Boston to Bloomfield Hills, MI, where he brought his unique training and skills and developed a thriving surgical practice. He had a passion for surgery, worked long hours, and loved taking care of his patients, who he prayed for daily.

Roy lived with his growing family in Michigan for the next 25 years. They welcomed 6 more children to the group, 17 total, all graduating from Andover High School. Somehow, Roy found time to share his hobbies with his children. He loved motorcycles and the latest gadgets in computers, photography, and technology. He also loved bullet reloading and the science of cooking, baking, and grilling. Roy treated each hobby with the same precision and exactness as he performed in surgery.

Roy and Mary bought a small hobby farm in South Lyon, Michigan, so his children "could learn how to really work." His respite from his surgical work was manual labor at the farm. He enjoyed driving the tractor, horseback riding, gardening, bailing hay, beekeeping, woodworking, target practice, apple cider making, sheep sheering, and caring for a variety of numerous pets and animals. His most cherished hobby was the thrill and excitement of big game hunting in Africa.

Roy held high expectations for all those around him and had a direct manor. However, pealing back the layers, he had a generous heart and privately gave freely to many. Roy was a natural storyteller. He could even captivate the attention of a room full of teenagers in Sunday School and bring them to tears with laughter.

His time in Bloomfield Hills was not without personal challenges. Roy endured the loss of his young daughter Julie, to cancer. He often said her death, "literally broke my heart." Roy underwent open-heart surgery soon after. It also broke his heart to retire from his surgical practice. While recovering, he found purpose in serving as a Medical Missionary for The Church. In 2002, Roy and Mary were called to serve a 3-year mission, as mission president of the Munich Germany-Austria Mission. He loved his missionaries like his own children and spoke proudly of their faithful efforts in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Roy spent his golden years with Mary in Salt Lake City, Utah, and visits to their small farm in St. Charles, Idaho. He continued church service as an ordained Patriarch while relishing in his exponentially growing family. He truly found joy and rejoicing in his posterity, especially for his grandchildren, who lovingly called him "Opa." He freely offered affection, bear hugs, and encouragement with all of his grandchildren and particularly enjoyed bragging about their individual feats and accomplishments. He would often say, "I have the best grandkids in the world!"

Roy was an exceptional person who lived an extraordinary life. He had a deep and abiding testimony of Jesus Christ. He often acknowledged miracles and the hand of the Lord guiding and protecting him at every turn. His life

was full and he touched many people. Roy left a great legacy of faith, hard work, and love of family for generations to come.

LeRoy is preceded in death by his parents, brother Ralph, and daughter Julie. He is survived by his loving wife, Mary; his children- LeRoy (Rosemary), Richard (Gemina), Douglas (Kristina), Bryan (Kristina), Emily (John), Michael (RayAnne), Jeffery (Tami), Cheryl (Paul), Robert (Eva), Mary (Mark), Alison (Paul), Suzanne (Scott), Rebecca (Paul), Cathleen (Pete), John, Christina (Scott); 88 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, and his sister Barbara and brother Alvin.

Funeral services will be held Friday September 20, 2024 at 11:00 am at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building located at 1320 S Wasatch Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah. A viewing will be held Thursday evening from 6:00-8:00 pm at the same location. A short viewing will be held the day of the service from 10:00-10:40 am.

Interment to take place at Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park, 3401 S Highland Drive.

Those wishing to view the COMPLETED service via Zoom can click "Watch Service" or follow the link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/1Id1zKiaVt2Ao_8CDxzkBpzol8z5j0puQ-aLxdAMXd3QdkRo2ChJPty20cIKXkum.vkK6C