

# Michael “Coach” Furness

*April 18, 1944 ~ April 24, 2024*

On Wednesday, April 24, 2024, enveloped in the love of his family, our joyful and joy-filled father, Michael (Mike) John Furness, passed away at the age of eighty. Affectionately known as “Coach Furness” to the thousands of students he taught over the 35+ years of coaching junior high school physical education and athletics, he is survived by his three children, CoriLyn, Eliot, and Tyler, his eight grandchildren, and his one great-granddaughter who, along with the countless others he mentored and inspired, will forever carry his legacy forward. He was preceded in death by his loving wife Kathy, and sons Ryan and Alex.

Born on April 18, 1944, to Ephraim and Irene Furness, Mike was raised as a child in Hunter, Utah with his siblings. His passion for athletics was ignited at a young age, a flame fanned by the influence of his mother, and he excelled in various sports. Mike’s journey led him through Wheatridge High School in Colorado, where he starred on the football team and was designated as “Most Preferred” (thank you for the “good looks” Grandpa Eph!).

Following his high school years, Mike embarked on a transformative journey of service and learning, undertaking a M■ori-speaking LDS mission in the Cook Islands. His experiences there enriched his spirit and broadened his perspective, laying the foundation for a life of service, gratitude, and compassion.

Continuing his pursuit of knowledge and excellence, Mike attended Southern Utah University, where he distinguished himself both academically and athletically. He later earned his Master's degree from the University of Utah, a testament to his work ethic and commitment to personal growth.

After college, he met and married Kathy on December 21, 1972, in Ogden, Utah, and they shared a bond of love, companionship, family, and adventure for 50 years until her passing on December 27, 2022.

Mike began his teaching and coaching career at Kearns Junior High before moving to Eisenhower Junior High where he became a staple in the physical education and athletic programs for 35 years. Along with his constant tenure in the gym, he also spent time teaching other courses, including health education and American history, as well as serving students in administering the after-school grant program.

Mike's youthful zest was contagious and reflected in his diverse interests and passions. He loved the outdoors, fishing, hunting, camping, backpacking, the BYU Cougars and the Utah Utes, the Utah Jazz, motorcycles, badminton, country music, cowboy poetry, McDonald’s filet-o-fish sandwiches with extra tartar sauce, caramel marshmallow malts, Milk Duds, and Whoppers. Yet amidst his varied interests and pursuits, nothing brought him greater joy than the simple pleasures of family gatherings at the cabin in Bear Lake, where happiness and memories were etched into the fabric of time.

A man of faith and conviction, Mike's life was a testament to his abiding belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ expressed by the way he served others and exemplified an attitude of gratitude. He was a devoted member of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he served in various callings and capacities all throughout his life including scout master, the bishopric, ward missionary, and primary.

Though he may have bid us farewell, his spirit lives on in the countless lives he touched, and his memory will be forever cherished by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

In celebration of his remarkable life, a memorial service will be held on Friday, May 3, 2024, at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. Dimple Dell Rd. (10600 S.), Sandy, UT 84092, where family and friends are invited to gather and honor his legacy. A visitation and viewing will be held from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, a graveside service and dedication will follow from 11:00 AM to 11:30AM, and a celebration of the life of Michael John Furness will be held afterwards in the onsite greenhouse.

As we mourn his passing, let us also rejoice in the gift of his presence in our lives, and may his spirit guide us through the journey ahead, filled with love, laughter, and an enduring sense of gratitude. Rest in peace, Coach Furness, knowing that your legacy will endure for generations to come.