

Nels Mario Sather

March 31, 1946 ~ September 30, 2023

Dr. Nels M. Sather, beloved husband, father, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully on September 30, 2023, surrounded by his family, due to complications from Parkinson's disease.

Nels was born in Bari, Italy, to Thomas Marius Sather and Maria Calia Sather, a Norwegian and an Italian who met and married during the war. The young Sather family emigrated from Italy to Washington State where Nels and his sisters Ingrid and Karen grew up on the family farms. In high school and during college summers, Nels was a Teamster, working at the local cannery.

Nels went to BYU (and much to his children's dismay, cheered for the football team throughout his life) to study psychology. At school, he fell hard for his sister's roommate, Heather, who agreed to date him primarily because he had the longest hair on campus.

Theirs is a love story for the ages. After many dates at Heaps, they married in June of 1970. They welcomed children Matthew, Megan, Courtney, and Noah in the five years that followed and together they raised the pack of "hoo-yays" who dutifully wore their going-places outfits on many road trips and camping adventures. Nels cherished Heather and his children, as well as his beloved eight grandchildren Jessica (Cristian), Joel, Isaac, Gregory, Sydney, Jillian, Oliver, and Winslow and great-grandchildren Collins and Keelan.

Nels came of age in the era of the Vietnam war. He joined the U.S. Army, trained as a language specialist, and served in military intelligence in Saigon (he didn't recommend it). After his return, he earned a Master's degree from Idaho State University and his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Utah State University. His career was devoted to mental health and the care of others. He led clinical efforts in a large mental health system and retired as the Chief Psychologist at Idaho's State Hospital South.

Nels was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease several years ago. Heather was by his side, caring for him through good times and hard days and the kids are deeply grateful. Despite the truth of it being a long goodbye, the last few years of togetherness were a blessing.

Nels is survived by his wonderful wife Heather; his children, kids-in-law (Melodee, Jen, Roddy, and Heather), grandchildren, and great grandchildren; his sisters Dana Hawkins and Karen Bingham, and many relatives, his care group, friends, and Buddy. Special thanks to the social workers and medical teams at the VA Hospital and the hospice care team.

Family and friends will celebrate Nels's life and military service in early November.