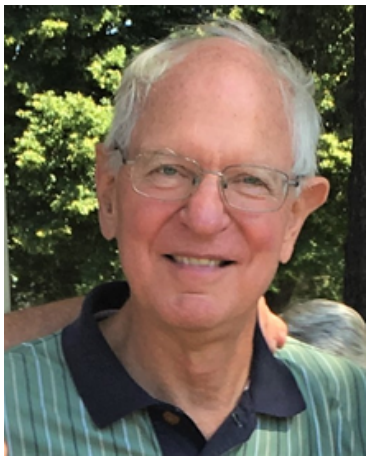


# Newel Branson Call

*May 26, 1944 ~ November 19, 2020*

Thursday November 19, 2020, one of the great humanitarians of the 2nd half of the Twentieth century passed: Newel Branson Call, born May 26th 1944 to Amy Brinton Call and Newel Thorstrom Call.

He spent most of his growing up years in Portland, Oregon where he felt compelled to play excellently every sport at Lincoln High School –he also was student body president. After graduating high school he spent the summer on an oil supply tanker in the South Pacific, where he was an oil wiper, to pay for anticipated college expenses. He had paid for all expenses and clothes, etc. since age 8.

He accepted a full scholarship to Harvard College where he also lettered in baseball, basketball and football. He interrupted his studies for an LDS mission to Germany and the ensuing military debt in the Marine Corps (where he also played inter-military basketball). He graduated Harvard in 1970.

That summer he married Kathleen Lach in the Salt Lake Temple and started Duke Medical School in Durham, North Carolina on scholarship. His first 2 children (Lisa Lynn Call Franklin and Erin Kathleen Call) were born there. He did an Internship at the University of Utah in internal medicine, then went on to residency at the UCLA Jules Stein Eye Institute. This was followed by a UCLA Oculoplastic fellowship and a final Orbital Oculoplastic Fellowship at the world famous Moorefield Road Eye hospital in London, where he moved his family when his youngest son was 3 months old, and lived on savings and night work.

While a resident in LA he supported his growing family by working nights in the county hospital. Travis Branson Call and Thomas Tyler Call were born at UCLA gratis also. He also had the opportunity during that period to take a rotation in Tegucigalpa Honduras which changed the course of his medical practicing life, igniting his love for humanitarian service. He subsequently took his whole family to Sierra Leone for a summer in 1988 to become the 2nd eye Doctor for 5 million people and then St Kitts for similar work with his family.

He set up the first Oculoplastic Eye practice in Salt Lake in 1980, where he was associated with all the local hospitals' ER's, also in St George and Idaho, since he was the only eye trauma doctor in those regions at that time. After medical training, he paid off all his debts by working for the royal family of Arabia in Riyadh for 4 months. He returned to his new and final daughter – Suzanna Call Hobbs – and private practice in 1983.

His 120-hours-a-week internship became a routine 80 hours a week for the next 30 years. He consistently interrupted his practice with his gratis work in 60 nations of the world – training doctors in the complicated eye trauma and tumor surgeries (not yet had among them) so doctors could stay in their own countries to treat their own poor. He worked with local contacts to establish surgical facilities, sometimes arranging outside funding and supplies, building up the doctors and the medical profession wherever he worked. In many countries he often used rustic equipment, school tables or antiquated operating rooms, honestly praising their local doctors' skills, intellect

and dedication. He trained U of U eye residents at the Veterans Hospital, taking his turn as Chief of Surgical Staff at LDS Hospital, and Chief of Ophthalmology at Primary Children's Hospital.

He served many thousands here and thousands more abroad. He helped establish Deseret International – a humanitarian eye charity (now Charity Vision), and then worked in the emerging Church of Jesus Christ Vision Initiative traveling frequently on their behalf while still travelling for Deseret International. Those assignments ranged from 5 to 9 times a year. He was present and working in the Haiti earthquake of 2010.

Always very active in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, he served another mission in Chile with his wife in 2015-17 as medical consult for the country's LDS missionaries. He told every missionary he met to go to medical school because he loved the humanitarian service opportunities it provided. After returning to SLC, he developed Alzheimer's disease and died in his home amid the chaos and noise of a happy family (and most of his posterity) surrounding him.

Branson was a great grandson of Israel Call and thereby a descendant of Anson Call. Branson was preceded in death by his parents and older sister, Amy Lynn Call Harker Weiler. He is survived by his younger sister, Alison Call Hubbard, his 5 children, Lisa Lynn Call Franklin, Erin Kathleen Call, Travis Branson Call, Thomas Tyler Call, Suzanna Call Hobbs, his wife Kathy and 13 Grandchildren.

Private family services will be held. Interment will be at Salt Lake City Cemetery.