

# Owen Nelson Baker

*December 23, 1935 ~ January 15, 2025*

Owen Nelson Baker was born on December 23, 1935, in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the middle of the Great Depression. He was a middle child: Louise, Nelson, and Bill, known in childhood as Weezie, Sonny, and Wiggy. Twins Howard and Helene joined the family ten years later. The family was poor. He ate lots of oatmeal, and learned to make raisin pies after school. His grandfather taught him to catch trout with his hands in Mill Creek.

Nelson served in the Brazil Mission from January 1956 to December 1958, traveling by train to New York and then by boat to Brazil; a month's journey. His three-year mission experience was the most formative of his life, and endowed him with a love for Brazil and its people.

Nelson married Lucille Bawden, his companion of 62 years, on April 5, 1962, in the Salt Lake Temple. As he said in his memoir, "Within a month after returning home as a missionary, I saw in a vision my wife, and married her three years later. We deeply love and appreciate each other. She has been a wonderful companion. There has been a continual affirmation that we are a companionship for eternity."

Nelson worked grueling mining and railroad jobs at Kennecott to fund his mission. He left the funds with his father, who quietly paid for Nelson's mission from his own scant funds. Nelson returned to his entire Kennecott savings, which he used to attend college.

Nelson studied English and attended law school at the University of Utah, graduating second in his law class in 1963. He completed a masters of law program at New York University, where he and Lucille lived in Greenwich Village, and the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on a Fulbright scholarship.

Returning to the United States, he began his legal career at Johnson & Johnson in 1965, moving his young family to a duplex on Oak Road in North Brunswick, New Jersey.

As a member of the high council in 1970, he was assigned to be building superintendent of the new stake center, funded by church members and built with church member labor. He contributed more than 300 volunteer hours building the stake center.

In 1970, Nelson and Lucille contracted to build a house on Boston Post Rd in East Brunswick, NJ, contributing many nights of sweat equity in the form of finished carpentry and painting. In 1971 they moved in. In 1972 they moved out. Nelson had been called to preside over the fourth mission in Brazil, the Brazil South Central Mission, later named the Brazil Sao Paulo South Mission. During this second three-year mission to Brazil, Nelson bonded with hundreds of missionaries. They were still enjoying mission reunions with him and Lucille as recently as 2024.

Nelson devoted his energies to service in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including 31 years of consecutive leadership as a bishopric counselor, bishop, mission president, stake presidency counselor, and stake president. He was active in scouting, and attended every one of his sons' summer camps. Beyond his Church and

religion, he was also deeply spiritual: “To me, God always has been real: a loving presence. Prayer was real because God was real. I always believed he was there, and shared my prayer. I can think of no beginning to this. It always has been my reality.” He has shared this reality with every member of his numerous posterity.

Nelson was an international corporate attorney for Johnson & Johnson for 33 years, from 1965 to 1998. He travelled throughout South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Great Britain, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, creating and advising affiliate companies. Once he was even contacted by the CIA to help intercept a shipment of pharmaceuticals to a terrorist nation.

Retirement gave Nelson the time to synthesize his decades of thought and research about his Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ, culminating in his published book, *The Process of Atonement*.

His greatest pleasure was being with his family, including at annual week-long reunions.

He is beloved in his Sandy ward for his service to neighbors and his insightful gospel comments.

Nelson is survived by his wife Lucille (Bawden) Baker, brothers William (Sherry) Baker and Howard (Diane) Formisano, sister Helene (Bruce) Byington, children Roger, Megan, Carolyn (Mike), Jeanette (Craig), and Steven (Megan). He is preceded in death by his sister Louise Kemp and daughter Sarah Jane Baker Scott.

A viewing will be held Sunday, January 19 from 6:00-8:00 PM at Larkin Sunset Garden Mortuary (1950 E. Dimple Dell Rd, Sandy, Utah) and Monday, January 20 from 9:30-10:45 AM at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (2195 E. Pepperwood Dr., Sandy, Utah). Funeral services will begin at 11:00 AM followed by the interment at Larkin Sunset Gardens Cemetery (1950 E. Dimple Dell Rd, Sandy, Utah).

To view a recording of the service via zoom, please click on the tab above that says "Watch Service" or follow this link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/jWEVJUugGDEqjQ0O5ZX9zI77HT_cnIcu0zWxHX0iMSPBI3syYYbHwzcGfBuGZSuS.