Gary Kent Justesen

September 9, 1949 ~ July 2, 2019

Gary Kent ("Frog") Justesen, 69, passed away unexpectedly in Salt Lake City on Tuesday, July 2, 2019. He was born on September 9, 1949, in Murray, Utah, the eldest of the six sons of Glade Clifford and Margaret Elaine (Toomer) Justesen.

Gary grew up in Kearns, Utah, graduating from Cyprus High School in 1967 where he played football and took a leading role "behind the curtains" in every theatrical stage production mounted there during his high school years. As a very young teenager at Kearns Jr. High, a fire was lit in Frog's soul for theatrical stage work that never ebbed or dimmed for over 56 years. Frog also played guitar in several local rock bands, including "Jolly Green and the Giants" and "The Full Measure", that had notable successes throughout the West Valley and Salt Lake County areas, and served as back-up band for national touring headliners at Lagoon during the 1960s. Frog briefly attended the University of Utah in 1967-68, serving as a manager for the football team and as a stage carpenter and electrician at Pioneer Memorial Theater and Kingsbury Hall. He enlisted in the United Sates Marine Corps in July 1968, was awarded Honor Man of the Utah Platoon, and served a combat tour in Alpha Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division in the I Corps area of northern South Vietnam in 1969-70. Following military service, Frog resumed his passion for theatrical stage work at the University, and became a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local #99 in Salt Lake City. Over the next four and a half decades Frog worked tirelessly to build his business and further the interests of the arts and entertainment industry in Utah in myriad ways. He worked for and with the Utah Repertory Dance Theater, Utah Opera, and Ballet West among many others. In the 1990s, he was a recipient of a Governors' Arts Award medal. He served as a stage and lighting technician for numerous national touring acts, including singer Barry Manilow, and many others. For over 40 years, Frog served as the Head Carpenter for the New York City Ballet, and thereby also became a well-known "stage-hand" in theaters and opera houses throughout Europe and other parts of the world. Frog was the founder and president of the business that is now known as Oasis Stage Werks. He was a generous and caring husband, brother, friend, employer, leader, teacher and mentor to countless family members and friends, and to literally thousands of his fellow "stage hands" and others in the entertainment industry for over five decades. His presence will be sorely missed.

Frog was preceded in death by his sister, Glae Deen, and his mother and father. He is survived by his wife, Becky, and brothers Kirby (Pam), Kimball (Kate), Tom (Terri), Rick (Collette) Brian (Jennifer), and many nieces and nephews.

Viewing sessions will be held at Larkin Mortuary at 260 East South Temple, Salt Lake City on Tuesday, July 9th from 6-8 p.m., and Wednesday, July 10th from 9:30-10:45 a.m. Funeral services will commence Wednesday July

10th in the Larkin Mortuary chapel at 11:00 a.m. Interment will follow at the Spring City Cemetery in Sanpete County.