

Pepe Taualai Gautavai

June 28, 1936 ~ January 17, 2024

A deep love for God and family became the central source of his joy and how he would faithfully live his life. Where peace and plenty here abide, putting faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in Him is how dad was driven to provide for our family first spiritually, and then temporally. Pepe Taualai Gautavai, 87 of Bountiful, Utah entered eternity peacefully at home on January 17th, 2024, surrounded by the companionship of the Holy spirit, warmth, and love of his family.

He was born June 28, 1936, in the village of Mata'uta, on the Island of Upolu, Samoa to Taualai Taamu Gautavai and Taaga James Roberts. He would learn early on from his mother the importance of family, as she would serve as caretaker for her family – lessons of taking care of each other, doing good works, and working hard.

She would teach him how to care for and live off the land, farm, and fish. The harvest and bounty of these things would lead to more life learning in preparing meals and ensuring there was always enough to share with others. Virtuous building blocks that would support his personal ministry to family and friends throughout his life.

He enjoyed growing up on the Islands. His days of youth were filled with learning the things of God and eternal in nature; combining the requisite work ethic to reach his aspirations, life goals and hope. He formed many childhood friends, many who would remain connected through time and distance. Family was important, he treasured his close relationship with his Mulitalo aiga. Manu Mulitalo Sr., he considered a lifelong brother-though they were first cousins-as they shared early years together under his mother's care and tutelage in the home. Education was also important to him as he proved to be an excellent student in the Marist Brothers primary and secondary parochial school an all-boys Catholic school.

He met the love of his life, Faitasia Fua Puefua, Sia at a church activity. He summoned the courage to ask her out, on a day that she was tending children with one child holding her hand and another child nestled against her hip. They would wed February 11, 1956, in the village of Mesepa, on the Island of Tutuila, American Samoa. He was a faithful and loving eternal companion to Sia for 68 years going on at the time of his passing. Two of their children, Taaga and Sia were born in Samoa before they emigrated to the United States in 1958. Settling in Laie, Hawaii, they would add Matsonia, a son; Alice, a daughter; Carson another son; and Faaagi the baby of the family. They were sealed as a family for time and all eternity in the Laie Hawaii Temple in July 1963. He worked long days in construction jobs while in Hawaii to ensure his young family would have sufficient for their needs and make ends meet.

From Laie, Dad would move his young family to San Francisco, California in 1968 for better work opportunities and life. In the bay area he would renew relationships with family and friends. He would also forge new friendships that would prove to be providential. Spiritual roots would deepen as he continued to trust God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. With young eyes watching he would work multiple jobs throughout the city to ensure the family would

be okay and propel them for the next progression. Not long in the Bay Area, he would move his family again, this time to Utah where his eldest daughter attended BYU and his mother lived in the Salt Lake valley. The way of life in Utah was appealing to him in raising and supporting a family. In February 1974 dad packed the family station wagon with U-haul trailer in tow traversing the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and Great Salt Lake plains. Next month February 2024 marks 50 years in Utah.

The time in Utah would see him work multiple jobs in security, supply chain, and manufacturing fields. His focus continued to be on his faith and now maturing family spanning primary to secondary to college education. He cared for his aging mother through the end of her life. He and Sia became first-time homeowners in Salt Lake City. Dad was able to support his children in completing college educations and serving fulltime missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints throughout the world. Dad was blessed to go to work for the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) as a bus operator. If you've ridden UTA in the Salt Lake valley and Wasatch Front from 1978 to 2020, a good chance you may have ridden on his bus. He considered it a secure, honest job where he was able to provide a good living for himself and family. In 42 years, he was able to reach the top spot in seniority, he was a dependable and safe operator. He was awarded "3-million miles driven accident free" in the time before retirement. He viewed his employment as a blessing and a means of helping to reach personal and family goals.

A bus route through a northeast Bountiful neighborhood had open land where once an apricot orchard grew, now displaying "for sale" signage on lots that drew his attention. He would purchase the land where he and mom would build their dream home in the land of Bountiful. In August 1988 he moved to Bountiful into their newly constructed home. A place where all were welcome, but especially a place of refuge for his and Sia's posterity. Here he would build lasting friendships and relationships. The family was surrounded and influenced for good by countless friends, neighbors, and people of faith. In Bountiful the family would grow with marriages, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and opportunities to serve. He believed his hopes and aspirations for himself, mom and his family were now even 88 years later being realized through the providence of God. His journey is a testimony of perseverance, hard work and ultimately trust in God.

Dad was a lifelong follower of Jesus Christ and member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, having a great and abiding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and testimony in the restoration of the fullness of the Gospel and plan of redemption. He faithfully served in many callings in the Church. His greatest calling was as disciple, husband, and father. He took great pleasure and care with family watching children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, grow and mature. At a moment's notice he would drop all, anything to attend to children, grandchildren, and friends in need. His grandchildren love grandpa!

Dad is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sia; daughters Taaga, Sia and Alice. His parents, siblings, Amelia Iosua, Simi Gautavai, Ane Paialii, Loiti Gautavai. He is survived by sons, Matsonia Bountiful; Carson (Rochelle) Bountiful; daughter, Faaagi, Bountiful; grandchildren, Erika (Kelcy) Hawaii; Lina (Tetsuya) Japan; Keri (Shou) Japan; Emilee (Harumi) Japan; Camree (Kacie) Herriman; Rylee (Mele Lupe) Herriman; Mekelee, Orem; Richard, Saratoga Springs. Great-grandchildren Ekolu, Eliana, Ewalani, Hawaii; Savannah, Jackson, Herriman; Taualai, Emil, Makamae, Herriman; Luka, Japan. And many nephews and nieces.

Dad's mortal presence and example will be missed by his family and friends.

A family service and viewing will begin at 9am, with the funeral service beginning at 11:30am on January 26th, 2024 at the Bountiful Heights Ward, 33 South Moss Hill Drive, Bountiful, Utah. Interment will follow at Redwood Memorial Cemetery in Taylorsville, Utah.

For those unable to attend the service in person, the family invites you to join via Zoom, at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82735483319