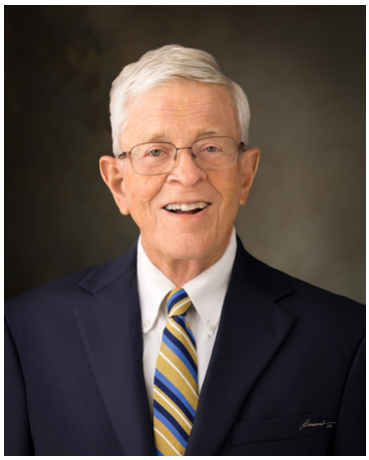

Ramon Eskel Johnson

October 28, 1935 ~ April 8, 2025

Our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, Ramon Eskel Johnson, passed away in his home surrounded by his loving family on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Ramon was born in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 28, 1935 to Eskel Anstrum Johnson and Julia Hendrickson. The third of four children, he was raised on Lowell Avenue, a small street spilling over with friends. He enjoyed sledding, camping with Boy Scouts, and learning to ski in the Deseret News Ski School. He attended Douglas Elementary School and Roosevelt Junior High School where he began an 8-year stint delivering newspapers and won several art competitions.

His characteristic smile and fun-loving nature helped him develop many life-long friendships at East High. He participated on the wrestling team, with the ski club, and as a cheerleader. When he was a senior, he won the Knudsen Cup for skiing.

At the University of Utah, he created more cherished friendships including his Beta Theta Pi fraternity brothers. As a versatile member of the ski team, Ramon earned NCAA Championship podium finishes in the ski jumping, downhill, and slalom events in 1957 and 1958. He won the Engen Cup and was named to the All-American Ski Team. His ski career ended abruptly in 1959 when he injured his knee on a training jump at the US Olympic training facility in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Ramon paid his way through college working hard in summer construction, delivering papers, and doing finish painting work. He served in the Air National Guard and graduated from the University of Utah in 1959 with a degree in mechanical engineering, earning Pi Tau Sigma Honor Society in engineering. After working for General Electric in New York, he became interested in business and returned to the University of Utah to complete an MBA in 1962. He subsequently earned a PhD in Finance from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1966. During these years, he met a fellow Badger while on a college ski trip to the northern peninsula of Michigan. Patsy Orton captured his heart and the two later wed on June 11, 1966, a marriage they later solemnized in the London Temple in July of 1969.

Dr. Johnson joined the faculty at the University of Utah, initially serving as director of the European MBA Program, and as a member of the Scholastic Standards and Academic Policy Committees, among others. He became Chair of the Finance Department in 1972, and in 1978 was appointed Associate Dean of the College of Business. He loved teaching and prioritized his relationship with his students for which Dr. Johnson received many Outstanding Teaching Awards in both the undergraduate and MBA programs. He served two terms on the Federal Reserve Board and enjoyed the regular travel to our Nation’s beautiful capital.

Ramon and Patsy raised their family in the Avenues of Salt Lake City. He cherished each of their children: Margit, Erik, Julia, Camille, and Lars. He somehow found the time to support them in their countless endeavors — school, church, sports, and social — making each one feel loved and seen. He taught them to do the things he loved: skiing, dirt biking, gardening, hiking, backpacking, camping, boating, waterskiing, and white-water rafting. Those were happy, adventurous years!

Ramon was generous with his time, serving on The Greater Avenues Community Council and in many church callings over the years. He especially loved the time he spent serving in various bishoprics. In caring for local church buildings, he shoveled enough snow to cover all of Utah's mountains twice over. He and Patsy extensively researched their genealogy lines, knew their family history, and frequently served in the temple. Ramon respected his pioneer heritage and actively participated in The National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers for many decades, serving in various leadership roles. He volunteered for the Park City Ski Team during his many years as a racing parent. Ramon served on various community and banking boards. Through it all, Ramon was a true disciple of Jesus Christ, greeting friends, associates, and strangers alike with joy and warmth.

A goal-oriented list maker, Ramon's steno pads could be found around the house listing to-do items. With his curious mind and engineering background, he wasted no time in accomplishing those varied tasks. His carpentry skills were excellent, and he improved their Avenues home many times over the years. Ramon knew the name of every flower a hiker in the Wasatch would encounter. He traveled extensively and enjoyed symphonies and operas all over the world but was happy at home repairing his sprinklers or improving the homes and gardens of his children. He shared his love of nature with his grandchildren, spending time with them at Bear Lake and his ancestral farmhouse in Glenwood, relishing Utah's ski resorts and extraordinary National Parks. He was thrilled to hear of their exploits on the slopes and trails. Oh, how we will miss his boyish smile and eyes that sparkled with love!

Ramon is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Patsy Orton Johnson, their children Margit (Bill) Caine, Erik (Rebecca) Johnson, Julia (Aaron) Whitehead, Camille (David) Larsen, and Lars (Dyan) Johnson, and 19 precious grandchildren whom he dearly loved. He is also survived by his sister, Marva Johnson Coombs. He is preceded in death by his parents and sister Janet Birkinshaw and brother DeLamar Johnson.

The family wishes to thank Fernando Enriquez Avila and Kristi and William with Aspire Home Health and Hospice for their loving assistance with Ramon's care.

Funeral services will be held Friday April 18 at 11:00 am in the Ensign Stake Center, 135 A Street in Salt Lake City, Utah with a viewing at 9:30-10:30 that morning. Friends may call the evening prior, Thursday, April 17 from 6 – 8:00 pm at the Stake Center. Internment will be at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Utah Symphony/Opera.