

Reed Forsgren Christensen

January 11, 1935 ~ September 16, 2022

Reed Forsgren Christensen passed away on September 16th 2022 from the effects of a stroke. Reed was born on January 11, 1935, the second oldest of four children, to Jacob Rulon and Opal Forsgren Christensen. They raised their children in the Avenues of Salt Lake City where Reed ran with his pals. His mother doted on him throughout his young life, even bringing his dinner to the ward gymnasium where he spent many hours playing ball. By his own report, he preferred basketball to homework. He graduated from West high school where his seminary teacher, Marian D. Hanks made a lasting impression. This did not keep Reed and his friends from pranking Brother Hanks, lighting a cigar in the ashtray of his car prior to Hanks transporting a General Authority of the Church. Regardless of such high-jinx, Reed graduated seminary and was called to serve a 30-month Latter-day Saint mission in Stockholm Sweden, the fifth consecutive generation in his family to do so. Here he fell in love with Sweden and the Swedish people and with Volvos. In Stockholm, he developed a close friendship with one of his Branch Presidents, Bo Wennerlund, which led to many special converts and a life-long correspondence. Following his mission, his relationship with Swedish missionary friends blossomed into a monthly dinner group that lasted 65 years.

Reed graduated from the University of Utah with a B.S. in sociology, where, in one of his sociology classes, he met and after a long courtship married Lois Sumner; they solemnized their marriage in the Salt Lake Temple on September 22, 1960. You might not be able to tell from his bluster, but she was always the brightest star in his life.

Reed turned down the security of his father’s business to become a high school teacher, a pivotal moment of inspiration and character. He taught psychology, sociology, and history at Cottonwood High School for 27 of his 30-year career. Along the way, he also built a lawncare and landscaping business where he was always a slow adopter of the latest technologies, preferring hand clippers to weed eaters. His professional choices proved fortuitous because teaching opened his schedule for coaching and his business, the perfect proving grounds for 5 sons. He coached Dilworth baseball for 13 consecutive seasons. Reed’s unique style of shouting, correcting, cajoling and encouraging his sons and their friends who played and worked for him made a lasting impact on their lives. His connection with these young men was one of his most satisfying achievements. Many of these boys sent the same message to the family after his passing: “Reed taught me how to work.”

Reed took great pleasure serving in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where he felt valued and respected. His favorite callings included lots of teaching. Being a Latter-day Saint was central to his identity and it would always surprise him when others felt differently.

Reed and Lois cultivated a family culture of industry, vigorous conversation, thoughtful religious pragmatism, and trust. Reed woke his boys up before school to read scripture and knelt beside their beds to pray with them at night. Somehow, he also convinced Lois of the virtues of fixing his meals. He ate a warm breakfast before work and sandwiches on homemade bread at lunch, with homegrown, handmade dinners with the family at night. They lived close to the soil, growing, gardening, clipping, trimming, recycling, and repurposing (his specialty with these last two was golf balls). They took summer vacations to the beach, to Bear Lake and to the Tetons. Nothing was ever extravagant, but abundance was unmistakable.

Reed always worked with his hands. In 1992, he and Lois purchased property on the Eastern Heber hillside and after both retired from teaching, they built a new life away from Wilson Avenue. Like Wilson Avenue and their Swedish dinner group, Reed and Lois created close friends in Heber, making this time one of the richest of their lives. Some people teased him for never finishing his projects, but if they really paid attention, they would recognize that the work was about the process, not the product. Reed loved the journey, perhaps to Lois' eternal dismay.

Reed's final years were filled with constant interactions with his sons, their wives, his grandchildren, and great grandchildren. It might not surprise you, that without his mother or Lois around, he somehow tricked his sons into bringing meals on a daily rotation. Reed never complained and was a genuine example of enduring well, having faced many physical setbacks. If you sat with him very long, he would repeat some of his favorite stories, repeat questions he asked you on previous visits, but he customized the questions to individuals; he loved nothing more than talking about his ancestors, and his mission. After Gram died, one of the questions he asked often was "where is Lois?" Now he is reunited with his wife of 58 years. We are confident a grand reunion awaited his arrival after a long separation from his mother, father, his sister Carol, his granddaughter Bethany, and many others.

Reed is survived by his younger brother and sister and their spouses, Richard and Kay Christensen and Marilyn and Jay Greenwood, his sister in-law Marilyn Sumner, his five sons and their spouses, Steve and Christine, Jeff and Chris, Doug and Sara, Gregg and Marian, Chad and Kristin, twenty-seven grandchildren, and seventeen great grandchildren. We extend our sincere gratitude to all who helped make Reed comfortable in his last months, weeks, and days.

We will receive friends of Reed and his family on Friday, September 23rd from 6:00-8:00 pm at Larkin Sunset Mortuary on 2350 E. 1300 S. He will be interred on Saturday morning, September 24th at the Salt Lake Cemetery at 10:00 am and funeral services will follow at 12:00 pm at the Latter-day Saint Chapel at 3408 S. Celeste Way, 84109.

Memorial Service Youtube Link
https://youtu.be/EFWkPNOCH8w