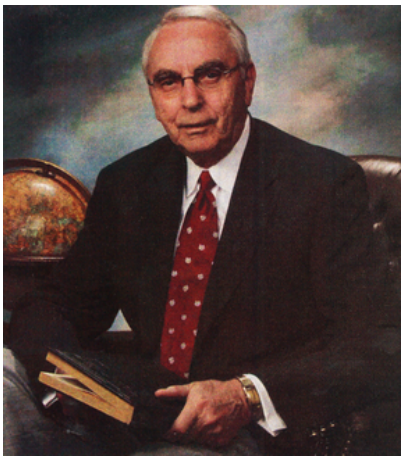

Regnal Washington Garff, Jr.

November 9, 1927 ~ February 25, 2023

Regnal Washington Garff, Jr., beloved by his family and many others, passed away February 25, 2023. Regnal was born on November 9, 1927, in Salt Lake City, Utah to Regnal W. Garff and Mary Ruby Tattersall. Having six older sisters and being the only boy, his father proudly referred to him as “the Seventh Wonder of the World!” Reg spent most of his education on the University of Utah campus, beginning with eight years at the Stewart School. He then graduated from East High School and carried on his education at the U of U, receiving a degree in Psychology. He also served at the end of World War II in the 185th Engineer Combat Battalion for the United States Army. He then desired to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was called to the Netherlands. His experiences there laid the foundation for a strong testimony of the divinity of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Returning to the University, he began studies for his Juris Doctorate. While doing so he noticed a pretty brunette in the University library and was immediately attracted. On September 16th, 1954, he married Margaret Wheeler in the Salt Lake Temple. Their early marriage included his graduation from law school, a Graduate Certificate in Social Work, and the birth of their first child, Leslie. Their family grew to include four children, Leslie, Lisa, Marianne, and Regnal.

He opened a law firm with his close friend Frank Matheson and within a relatively short time he was appointed by Governor George D. Clyde in 1959 as a juvenile court judge in what is now, the Third District Juvenile Court. For decades he led with honesty, intelligence, great insight, patience, progressive implementation, sincere kindness, and concern for the lives of the literally thousands of youths who came before his court. In 1987 Reg was appointed by Governor Norman H. Bangerter to the Utah Court of Appeals where he served as the first presiding judge. Strong and enduring friendships were made with all his colleagues over the many years he served in the pursuit of law and justice for the State of Utah.

Reg and Margaret created a loving home where academics and talents were encouraged. Fun times at their family home in Bear Lake, many family trips, festive holiday traditions (especially Christmas and Halloween) created many memories and a strong atmosphere of love, loyalty, and great fun! Reg’s humor and incredible insight in handling any challenges that arose provided his family with mature and wise parenting. Margaret and Reg’s home was open to any and all who needed a place to temporarily stay. It included many nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and eventually Grandma Garff and sister, Glenna. There they found a haven of love and security. In December 1998, Margaret passed away leaving a heartfelt loss for the family.

On February 27th, 2004, Reg married Leslie Rogers Bailey. Eighteen months into their marriage they served a full-time mission for the Church of Jesus Christ at the Kirtland Historic sites in Kirtland, Ohio. Not only did it create a

strong bond in their new marriage, but the times they spent with the other missionaries made for so many happy experiences and cherished memories. Reg and Leslie enjoyed similar interests. They often sang duets together and enjoyed the arts, sports, and time spent with both families.

Reg's life was full of achievements. He was honored as Outstanding Judge of the Year, 1976; S.J. Quinney College of Law Award, Honorary Order of the Coif, 1978; Outstanding Appellate Court Judge, 1989; and, the University of Utah Merit of Honor Award, 1999. He served as a U of U Emeritus Alumni board member, culminating as President in 2003-2004. His church service as a home teacher, Bishopric member, High Councilor, and several times as Young Men's President was always fulfilled with concern and love for the welfare of others.

Reg's children, whom he deeply cherished, are: Leslie and Curtis Hansen, Lisa and Bob Foster, Marianne and Mike Reed, and Regnal and Lori Garff. Fourteen grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren call him Grandpa. He also created a strong bond of love with his wife Leslie's family. Her four children: Dr. Brent and Kim Bailey, Melinda and Todd Larsen, DeLee and Aaron Cheshire, and Bryan and Jamie Bailey, were grateful for his humor, his sincere interest and unselfishness with them, and especially the love and tender care he showed to their mother. Leslie's family includes 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. They too loved Reg, most not knowing any other grandfather.

Reg was preceded in death by his parents, beloved Margaret, his sisters Iris Rasmussen, Lois Nowlin, Betty Jo Wirthlin, Glenna Hyde, and sisters Jean and Elaine who passed away as young girls when diphtheria ravaged Salt Lake. Nieces, nephews, and numerous cousins (sixty-one first cousins), were all important to him. We love you dearest husband, Dad, and Grandpa! His motto was "Don't sweat the small stuff, and it's all small stuff!"

We, as a family, appreciate the love and concern of dear relatives, friends, neighbors, and ward members. You are loved. Excellent care was received at Sunrise Senior Living, making his last month of life comfortable and secure.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, March 4 at 12:00 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chapel at 2222 E Fisher Ln, Salt Lake City, UT 84109. A visitation will be held Friday, March 3 from 6 - 8 p.m. at the same church, and prior to the services at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday.

The Celebration of Life service will be broadcast on Zoom, please click on the "Watch Services" link above. You must be logged in to your Zoom account to view.