

Ronald Reed Ollis

January 30, 1935 ~ December 25, 2024

Ronald Reed Ollis passed away peacefully Christmas morning, December 25, 2024, in Taylorsville, Utah while surrounded by his loving family and with his hand held by the love of his life, Brooke. He was a truly amazing man with a big heart and will be sorely missed.

Ron was born on January 30, 1935, in Salt Lake City, Utah to Roy George Ollis and Belle May Reed. His family moved to Sugarhouse for a time before returning to Holladay. Ron told many stories of his youth, including how he and his friends would ride sleds down the hills of Holladay whenever it snowed—often crashing into fences because they couldn't stop easily from going so fast. He worked various jobs in his younger years, including as a paperboy in Sugarhouse and shoveling coal to earn money for college. Ron had graduated from Granite High School, Class of 1953.

He very much loved his brother Keith, who was six years older. When Ron was 16, Keith's plane went missing somewhere over Alaska on its way to the Korean War. His aircraft has never been found and they both have been reunited again after nearly 75 years apart.

Ron was the last survivor of the first three missionaries called by President David O. McKay to serve in Hong Kong for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They traveled to Hong Kong by boat for 19 days along with Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who was opening the Southern Far East mission. During that time, Smith stated that three missionaries were not enough for all of Hong Kong, so he pointed out five other missionaries on the boat to serve in Hong Kong instead of Japan. Ron served in Hong Kong from July 1955 to August 1958, later returning to Hong Kong with Brooke in 1996 for the dedication of the Hong Kong temple. He was amazed at how much had changed in the nearly 40 years since he was last there.

He earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from the University of Utah, and was a big fan of the Utes, including the Red Rocks gymnastics team. During meets, he had a press pass and took photos for his friend Ken's gymnastics newsletter, where the gymnasts would often purchase prints from him.

He worked in Public Relations at the Salt Lake Community College and then at the Utah Division of Water Resources within the Department of Natural Resources. During his time at Water Resources, he spoke with Terry Tempest Williams, who wrote in her 1991 book Refuge, "Ron Ollis is sharp. I like him." He framed this quote and hung it on his door at work.

Ron met Brooke on her 22nd birthday at a dance in September 1970. They were engaged on Christmas Eve 1970 at Temple Square and then married on April 1, 1971, in the Salt Lake Temple. They had an eternal love for each other and spent 53 years together, which still wasn't enough.

He had a big love of nature and a passion for fly fishing. He was an amazing photographer, particularly working in black and white, developing the film and prints himself. He played in the Fastpitch Softball Metro League as a catcher and often hit two homeruns a game. He started running at the age of 45, having a great time and completed three marathons. He loved the Indiana Jones movies, which brought out his infectious laugh. He was an avid golfer, finally accomplishing a life goal of getting a hole-in-one at Old Mill Golf Course in his 70s. Retirement allowed him more time for the things he loved to do, including many fishing trips to Strawberry Reservoir and attending his grandkids' activities. His favorite sports team (besides the teams his grandkids were on) is the Boston Red Sox, and he was ecstatic that he lived long enough to see them win the World Series in 2004, breaking the 86-year curse.

Ron had excellent ping-pong skills, which he utilized later in life when he and Brooke enthusiastically played pickleball three times a week, even at the age of 85. Once a month after pickleball, the players would feed the homeless at the Catholic Charities.

Ron was lovingly cared for by his amazing wife, Brooke, during the last years of his life.

Preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Belle, and his brother Keith. Survived by his wife Brooke, his eight children, Ron Ollis Jr, Greg (Dolly) Ollis, Tom (Leslie) Ollis, Caron (Ronnie) Barnes, Jennie Brown, Jason (Camille) Ollis, Dustin (April) Ollis, and Dirk (Jeffrey Kyle) Ollis, his 17 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren.

A viewing will be held Friday, January 3, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Taylorsville 1st Ward, 4845 South 1365 West. Funeral services will be Saturday, January 4th, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the same chapel; there will be a viewing one hour prior to the service. Interment will take place at Memorial Holladay Cemetery following the service, 4900 South Memory Lane (about 1990 East). The family would like to thank The Carriage Establishment and the Utah Pipe Band for the planned grand send-off at the burial site.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to organizations involved in the fight against dementia. Also, take a few moments to call your loved ones. And take your kids for strawberry ice cream, his favorite flavor, and enjoy a Cherry Coke Zero, his favorite drink.

Click on the Watch Service button above to view the recorded service.