

Timani Tonga

November 21, 1954 ~ March 6, 2025

Timani Tonga, a beloved son, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend to many, passed away peacefully at home on March 6, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of love, service, and unwavering dedication to his family and community. Born on November 21, 1954, in the village of Kolomotua, Tonga, Timani embodied the spirit of his homeland throughout his extraordinary life—a spirit of resilience, generosity, and an unbreakable bond with those he cherished.

Timani's journey started with his education in Tonga, where he attended Ngele'ia and Fatai Primary School before enrolling in his cherished Liahona High School. This institution instilled in him valuable life lessons and a lifelong passion for learning. In 1981, he graduated with a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University-Hawaii (BYUH), a significant milestone that paved the way for a fulfilling life. Shortly after, he returned to Tonga with his wife and their three older children, Verna, Joyce, and Via, where they welcomed five more children: the twins Beni and Timani, Vea, Merlin, and Sini, all born on Tongan soil.

Upon returning to Tonga, Timani embarked on a distinguished career, first with the church's Presiding Bishopric Office, then at the International Dateline Hotel, and finally at the Bank of Tonga. Eventually, he left the corporate world to run a meat shop, where his entrepreneurial spirit truly shone. There, he employed many young adults, treating them as part of his own family and providing them with the same care and guidance he gave his children. His passion for helping youth extended beyond his shop—he took great pride in assisting young adults in pursuing education at BYUH, a cause that held great significance for him.

Timani's life was enriched by service to his faith and community. He served as Bishop and counselor in the Stake Presidency, roles he fulfilled with humility and dedication. Yet, he often said his favorite calling was being a husband, dad and grandpa—titles he wore with unmatched devotion. His love for his family was matched only by his gift for lifting others through a kind word, a helping hand, or a shared laugh.

Timani leaves behind his devoted wife, Maniana, with whom he built a life grounded in love and faith. He was a proud father to his eight children: Verna Tukuafu (the late Sione Tukuafu), Joyce Tonga, Via Kefu (Tuifua), Beni Tonga (Devrie), D'monte Tonga, Vea Manumaleuna (Eathyn), the late Merlin, and Sini Vamanrav (Ram), brothers Afa (Langaola), Kingi (Celeste) and his only sister, Verna Bair (Brett). His heart swelled with joy as he became Grandpa to 16 adored grandchildren. He delighted in their energy, stories, and their boundless love. Timani was preceded in death by his beloved daughter Merlin, son-in-law Sione Tukuafu, his parents Motulalo and Lea-he-Ofa, his brother Palu Huaniumata and sister, Niuui, and his family finds solace knowing they are reunited in eternal embrace.

Timani’s memory lives on in the countless lives he touched—as an uncle who offered wisdom and humor, a friend whose loyalty knew no bounds, and a mentor to the young adults he inspired. Whether reminiscing about Tonga, working tirelessly for his family, or simply sitting in quiet contentment with loved ones, he brought light to every moment.

A celebration of Timani’s life will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 11 a.m., with the service at 2 p.m. at the Larkin Sunset Gardens in Sandy, Utah. Family and friends will gather to honor this extraordinary man.

Rest well, dear dad and grandpa, Timani- son of Nuku’alofa, patriarch of a loving family, and a friend to all. Your legacy of love and service will endure forever.