

Vernon Winkler

April 15, 1942 ~ January 21, 2022

Vernon Wendell Winkler, 79, of Copperton, Utah, passed away on Friday, January 21, 2022 from aspiration pneumonia and Mesothelioma at the Huntsman Cancer Institute, surrounded by his children.

Vernon was born on April 15, 1942, the first of four children, to Wendell Albert and Leota (Brady) Winkler in Fairview, Utah. He and grew up in Tooele, Utah and graduated from Tooele High School in 1960. He enjoyed visiting all of his grandparents in Sanpete County, and occasionally spent whole summers with them.

After high school he worked at the Tooele Smelter long enough to decide an office job would provide better working conditions and pay. He studied Mechanical Engineering at Weber State College. It was there that he met Charlene Ray. They married shortly after he graduated in 1969. They went on to have three children: Vance, Lara, and Travis, divorcing in 1992.

The young family moved to where good employment took them. They first lived in Nevada, then Utah, Idaho, and back to Utah, where they eventually settled in Charlene's hometown of Copperton. Vernon became heavily involved in the community and chose to stay in town after their divorce.

Vernon was proud to become a Professional Engineer. Most of his career was spent at the engineering firm "Ford, Bacon, and Davis". Located in the Research Park area of the University of Utah, the commute was a sacrifice. He was gone from the home for 12 hours, but still found the time and energy to attend his children's sporting events. He later enjoyed semi-retirement, picking and choosing contract work that suited him.

Vernon was incessantly proud of his children, and always supported them in their endeavors. Even when he didn't agree with their choices. In a letter to his daughter in 2019, he wrote, "My children are the best part of my life."

Vernon was an intellectual. He once said that he "thirsted for knowledge". He didn't push his children to do much, believing that they should learn from their mistakes; but education was an exception. He instilled a strong desire for his children to receive a college education, which they all achieved.

Vernon served the people of Copperton in many ways. He was a member of the Bingham Canyon Lions Club for 45 years. He held many key positions and took his responsibilities seriously. He also wore many hats as a member of the Town Council, and the Planning & Zoning Committee for Salt Lake County. His views were often opposed, but he always had the good of the community in mind.

Vernon was a passionate outdoorsman, and few could outshoot him with a shotgun. His two favorite activities were bird hunting, and fishing. He took his dream vacation in 2017 with his sons, hunting pheasants in South Dakota. Several times after retiring he took his family on Lake Powell vacations. This allowed everyone to have a good time with both water recreation and fishing.

Vernon was an avid golfer. He learned to play later in life and enjoyed the sport for many years. He loved the challenge, and the satisfaction of a good shot. His favorite golf buddies were Glenn Barton and many Lions Club members.

Vernon had many meaningful friendships. He met Lee Smith when they were assigned as locker partners in high school. Vernon was proud of Lee's military service and displayed some beer steins Lee sent him from Germany. They remained lifelong friends. Vernon said the best time of his life was in his early twenties having fun with Brad Fox and his brothers. The went fishing, hunting, and motorcycling. "Brad and me were magic. The sum exceeded the total of the parts." He met David Hastings in college, and they became hunting and fishing partners for many years. Vernon had many friends in the Lions Club, but none as close as Larry and Elaine Arritola.

Years before his cancer diagnosis, Vernon was quoted as saying, "Right, wrong, or indifferent; I am proud to say, I DID IT MY WAY."

Vernon is survived by his siblings: Melvin Winkler (Linda), Nila Hicken (Richard), Albert Winkler (Lorna); children: Vance Winkler (Rebekah), Lara Goeckeritz (Eric), Travis Winkler (Laura); grandchildren: Elissa Shipley, Austen Shipley, Emma Rogers (Jack), Mya Ohm (Taylor), Eden Winkler, Clark Winkler, Lauren Winkler, Teagan Winkler, Cora Winkler, Weston Goeckeritz; great-grandson: Reynen Ohm; and several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents Wendell and Leota.

A funeral will be held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, January 27, 2022. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meetinghouse: 8633 W Hillcrest Street, Copperton, Utah. A visitation will be held prior to the services beginning at 9:00 AM. Interment at the Bingham Cemetery immediately following the service.

Funeral services will be streamed via Zoom for those unable to attend or wishing to attend virtually.

A luncheon, slideshow, and sharing of memories following the interment will be held back at the church building. Everyone is welcome. Please come help us remember his good times.

To view the the previously held funeral services via Zoom, please click the "Watch Services" link above.