

Walter Elmer Kelly

October 2, 1932 ~ June 19, 2024

Walter Elmer Kelly departed this mortal world at the age of 91 during the early hours of June 19, 2024, at home surrounded by loving family members, including his four children and their spouses. He lived a long and fulfilling life, leaving a legacy of enduring well through the challenges of life's journey.

Walter was born on a beautiful autumn evening in 1932 in Pocatello, Idaho, the eldest of three children born to Roberta Lawrence Armstrong and Elmer Joseph Kelly. When he was eight months old, he contracted pneumonia and was diagnosed with bronchial asthma, which plagued him for the rest of his life. He also endured the heartache of losing his two-year-old brother when he was four and the death of his father from tuberculosis at age 18.

From a very young age, Walter learned the value of hard work, including driving a hay truck in the field at five years old. He performed other farm chores, including feeding livestock, milking cows, feeding chickens, and gathering eggs. He helped his father separate cattle and feed them at livestock sales. He also worked for his uncle at the Cream Top Dairy and harvested potatoes for local farmers.

At six years old, he began taking violin lessons, which gave him an early appreciation for beautiful music. He also learned to play the cornet when he entered junior high school, and he always encouraged his children to pursue musical education as a worthwhile endeavor. Walter studied hard in school and was always ranked at the top of his class. He was valiant, smart, talented, devoted, diligent, and meticulous. He had great integrity, grit, and learned to persevere to the end to achieve his goals.

Walter's sporting career began at 10 years old, when he cleared an area on a vacant lot and played sandlot baseball with the neighbor boys. This led to him playing on the Junior and Senior Veterans of Foreign Wars softball teams in Pocatello. At the national tournament, the junior team placed first and the senior team second. Walt also enjoyed other sports. He was a defensive end on Idaho State's freshman football team and was named the "Outstanding Freshman Player of the Year." He also played on Idaho State's freshman baseball and basketball teams. Following his freshman year, he received a baseball scholarship to BYU and played for the Cougars until he graduated with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a composite minor in economics, finance, and banking.

Following Walter's graduation from BYU, he chose to put his career plans on hold and serve a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was called to labor in the Central States Mission under the direction of Alvin R. Dyer, a man whom he greatly loved and admired. Toward the end of his mission, he began writing letters to Roberta Meline, the sister of fellow missionary Peter Meline. After Walt returned home in January 1957, he was asked by Peter to drop some luggage off to his sister in Salt Lake City, and Roberta and Walter finally met in person. They began to date, then became engaged during a trip to Lagoon on June 22, 1957, and were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on September 26, 1957.

Upon returning from the mission field, Walt earned his license as a certified public accountant and worked nine years for various public accounting firms in Salt Lake City. From 1966 to 1980, he was employed as the senior vice president and controller of Western Savings and Loan Company. Upon leaving that institution, he held the position of controller of Zion's Bancorporation until his retirement in 1998. He and Roberta enjoyed their retirement years compiling family histories, traveling, and spending time with family members. Roberta passed away in 2022, and Walt has missed her greatly since then.

Walter enjoyed serving in several ward and stake callings, including ward and stake clerk, counselor in the bishopric, and stake auditor. He was also always very generous in opening his home to anyone in need. He helped support many individuals with their educational goals and church missions, and by example he taught his children to look beyond themselves and recognize the needs of others.

Without a doubt, Walter's greatest joy came from his family. He was very proud of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was always aware of each one and what was happening in their lives at any given time. He was their biggest cheerleader and was generous in helping them to achieve worthwhile goals and dreams. He eagerly shared photos and stories of them with any friends or family, and he especially loved the great-grandchildren, always lighting up whenever any of them came to visit. We will miss his great demonstrations of love, hard work, diligence, generosity, integrity, and perseverance. He left us a wonderful legacy that we will strive to emulate as we move forward in our lives.

Walter is survived by his children, Mark Kelly (Jill), Steven Kelly (Stacey), Tamara Thueson (Eric), and John Kelly (Kymberley); 15 grandchildren; 27 and counting great-grandchildren; and sister Merlene Johns. He is preceded in death by his wife, Roberta, parents, and brother Charles.

Walter's family would like to give special thanks to his wonderful caregivers Andy, Cristy, Ashlyn, Izzy, Erin, and Alex. You were a tremendous blessing to Walter and our family, and we are so grateful for the love, kindness, and patience you so willingly shared. We would also like to express our gratitude to Dr. James Pearl, who cared for Walter for many years with respect and dignity.

Friends and family may join the family for visitation on Sunday, June 30, 2024, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E South Temple, Salt Lake City, and on Monday, July 1, 2024, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Foxhill Ward, 200 S Eagle Ridge Dr, North Salt Lake, prior to the funeral service, which will take place at 11:00 a.m. Interment will be at Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park, 3401 S Highland Dr, Millcreek.

To watch the recorded service, please click on the Watch Service button above.