

Walter LaRae Bills

December 11, 1942 ~ July 10, 2023

Walter LaRae Bills was born in Santa Maria, California. He was the oldest of 8 children, 7 boys, and 1 girl. Walt was born with a pure heart and strong faith that has served him well throughout his life. He was a kind and gentle young man. He loved sports and was quite good at anything he played. He avoided some of the contact sports and left that up to his younger brothers but excelled and had a great passion for basketball and baseball. After high school, Walt went to the University of Utah for a short time and passed on a professional baseball opportunity with the Pittsburgh Pirates to go on his much-anticipated mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Walt served a 2 ½ year mission in Japan. He loved the language and the people dearly.

After his mission, Walt went back to the University of Utah where he spent time with the basketball team before heading south to attend BYU. He graduated with a degree in Asian Studies and Japanese. He wanted to find a way to stay close to the Japanese people and culture that he grew to love so much. During college, Walt fell in love with his math tutor, Karen Kump. A passing test score allowing him to be an officer and pilot in the Air Force and a beautiful face and smile was all it took.

Walt and Karen were married in the Salt Lake Temple 55 years ago. A marriage that was not without its struggles but was truly an incredible example of love and a perfect friendship filled with laughter, comfort, pranks, service, and JOY.

During his married life, Walt served in the Air Force. He was a pilot and a Captain. He was assigned to Air Force Intelligence, rescuing POWs in Vietnam. Walt left the military after Vietnam to pursue other careers that would keep him closer to his family.

Walt traveled the world doing seminars and training and even took his family to live in Japan for a short time where he set up a business with his father. Ultimately, he settled into his passion career of being a hypnotherapist and specializing in NLP (neurolinguistics). Not only did he positively impact the performance of high school, college, and professional teams and athletes in this career, but he was able to save and bless so many lives that had the misfortune of trauma, abuse, or addiction. Walt improved the lives of many throughout his career as a hypnotherapist and he never stopped changing lives for the better after he retired. Walt was a natural healer, a great comforter, and knew how to make anyone feel special and loved. Walt continued to get phone calls to work with neighbors, friends, and strangers that were struggling (sports, depression, addiction, etc..) late into his 70's. He was highly recommended by all that worked with him. He was a natural optimist with unwavering faith and had an incredible belief system and understanding in the power of the mind and the law of attraction.

His coaching and mentoring did not start or stop with his clients. Walt's favorite time was spent coaching his three sons in football, basketball, and baseball. There was a mitt, a ball, a bat, a hoop, or hot box bases set up and

available at any given time for Dad and his kids. He had incredible sports intelligence and after spending some time recruiting for BYU football, he decided to go one step further and implement the BYU offense into his little league football team. Let's just say, those little kids won a lot of games believing they were college ready. Walt coached his sons for many years. Two daughters followed and although one loved sports as much as the boys and the other loved dance, he learned quickly it was more fun and the only option really, to support and cheerlead them on rather than try to coach them.

Walt loved his kids and being a DAD more than anything else in his life. When his children grew up and gave him grandchildren, he was the first volunteer to babysit. He was the grandpa on his hands and knees with 5 grandchildren draped over his back roaring like a lion around the room. He could dance with the worst of them, and he was the best bedtime storyteller. Never will his kids be able to listen to Goldilocks and the Three Bears and not think of their dad or grandpa's version.

Early in Walt's life, he was called to be a Sealer in the temple. Walt loved all of the opportunities he had to serve The Lord; on his mission, in his stake, in his ward but most of all, in the Temple. He served for 42 years; The Salt Lake Temple, The Jordan River Temple, and finished in the Draper Temple. Several of his children and grandchildren had the privilege of being sealed by him. Being a sealer was something he was meant to do in this life. He educated and loved each couple and made sure they were taught in a way where they could feel the spirit while also experiencing some laughter and joy about the new chapter of their lives.

Laughing came naturally to Walt. It was loud and happy and when he was with his brothers or sons, it became a full-body exercise. Walt loved to be surrounded by friends and family. Although there is not a soul that doesn't feel close to Walt that has spent time with him, there is one person that brought him more joy and happiness than anyone. His wife Karen was the perfect complement to him.

After retirement, Walt and Karen spent much of their days visiting neighbors, nursing homes, grandchildren, and serving in the Temple. They had a special bond, and you could often find them sitting on the couch holding hands. They would start their days with a devotional or scripture study and end the day visiting a neighbor or being visited by a stranger they had recently met, showed some love, and adopted into the family.

Together they were magical. They always put each other first and loved every minute they had together. In the last two years as his health declined, Walt showed faith and resilience and continued in his ways of being happy, positive, fun, and selfless. He suffered gracefully. Karen served him and told him each day everything she loved about him and together they would say, "We get another day." In his worst moments, you could ask him how he was doing, and he would always respond, "TERRIFIC." He would immediately turn the question back on you, how are YOU doing? He genuinely cared more about you.

Walt will be so missed in so many ways by those he left behind but there is great comfort and peace we all have in knowing that his ability to visit family, minister and serve, laugh without limits, and positively impact those in his presence lives on.

Walter is survived by his wife, Karen. His children, Walter (Camron) Bills, Jared (Tracy) Bills, Ryan (Lina) Bills, Alli Bills, and Amber (David) Greenwood. Walter LaRae Bills, age 80, passed away on July 10, 2023, at his home in Draper, Utah. He was born on December 11, 1942, in Santa Maria, California, to Walter Rudolph and Elsie Mathea Torgerson Bills. Walter married Karen Kump in the Salt Lake City Temple.

Preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, Scott, Jon Kenneth, and Ronald Bills.

Funeral Services will be held on Monday, July 17, 2023, at 12:00 pm at the Draper Mountain Point 1st Ward, 498 East Hollow Creek Road, Draper, Utah. A viewing will be held from 10:00 – 11:45 am prior to services at the church. Interment to follow with Air Force Military Honors to follow at Larkin Sunset Gardens Cemetery, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road, Sandy, Utah.