



## Jack A Nelson

August 5, 1930 - August 14, 2015

In his own words: I, Jack A. Nelson, leaped over the Great Divide on Friday, August 14, 2015 nine days after celebrating my 85th birthday. After hugging my loved ones and checking in I grabbed my cousins and my fly rod and hiked to the nearest trout stream (catch and release only). Patrice, my wife of nearly 48 years, will fill in the rest, hopefully noting my love of Our Heavenly Father, my Savior, my family and my many hunting and fishing buddies.

Jack was born in Artesia, California on August 5, 1930 to Adolph Nils and Ruth Jack Nelson. Graduating from Fullerton Junior College he continued his education at Brigham Young University—B.A. in Journalism 1956, University of Utah—M.A. in English 1964, and the University of Missouri—Ph.D. 1971. He applied this knowledge throughout his life through careers on the city desk of the Deseret News, professorships at Humboldt State University in California, the University of Utah and for more than twenty years in the Communications department at Brigham Young University where he mentored budding writers and journalists, always keeping an interest in their accomplishments by maintaining both professional and personal associations with many of them. While teaching magazine article writing he made sure he kept an active hand in the business. As the Utah editor for Western Outdoors magazine he spent many weekends and summers donning his hunting or fishing gear, heading out to “find a story”, and meeting many fine fish and potential venison.

Jack served in the Spanish American Mission for the LDS Church, the first to

do so from a wheelchair. He never lost his love for his Spanish-speaking hermanos y hermanas nor his ability to use their language. He often found himself even thinking in Spanish to the point of once baptizing his daughter using Spanish instead of English. His devotion to his Heavenly Father caused him to serve his church willingly in any capacity, teaching youth or adults, serving on Stake High Councils, and as Bishop in the Rivergrove 3rd Ward.

. Too many are the adventures and accomplishments in the field of international travel, participation in Wheelchair sporting events (Utah Rimriders Basketball, Tennis trophies, etc.) and research for books and articles.

Family connections were his most important source of self. Named for his mother's maiden name, he embraced his Jack family heritage attending family reunions in the mountains of southern Colorado every two years. His cousins were his brothers, his aunts and uncles like his own parents. His children were the delight of his life and his proudest accomplishment. His unconditional love gave them a soft place to land.

Jack was first and foremost a writer and novelist. He produced and created numerous stories, beginning with a real historical event then weaving a tale around it. Seven published books and numerous articles are authored by him. He had just completed his final piece of fiction, co-written with a former student and friend.

Jack is survived by his wife, Patrice, his three children, Willow Griffith, Laska Anderson, Jedediah Nelson, his sister, Betty Fern Marcroft and three grandchildren, Mercedes Anderson, Cash and Jesse Griffith. And at least 300 or more relatives who know and love him.

Funeral services will be held Monday, August 24, 2015, 11:00 a.m. at the LDS Edgemont Stake Center, 303 West 3700 North, Provo, Utah. Reception from 9:30-10:30 a.m. there also. Interment following at East Lawn Memorial.

In lieu of flowers please enjoy reading one of Jack's books—fiction lovers try *To Die In Kanab*; non-fiction readers try *Flashes In The Night*; intellectuals go

for The Disabled, the Media, and the Information Age.

# Cemetery Details

## East Lawn Memorial Hills

4800 East Lawn Drive  
Provo, UT

# Previous Events

## Viewing

AUG 24. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (MT)

Edgemont Stake Center  
303 W. 3700 N.  
Provo, UT

## Funeral Service

AUG 24. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

Edgemont Stake Center  
303 W. 3700 N.  
Provo, UT

# Tribute Wall



“ *Jack A Nelson*

October 05, 2023 at 07:49 PM



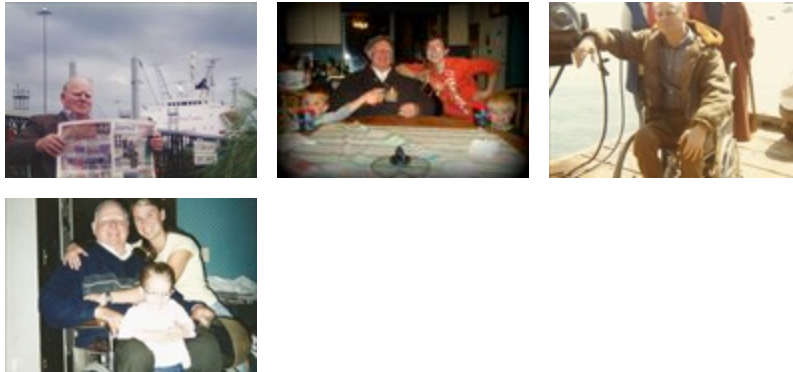
“ *I was reminded of Jack and Pat during a discussion about a movie we watched last week, and came across this on the internet. Though I lost touch for many years, Jack had a huge impact on my youthful testimony when we were in the Arcata, CA Ward. My heart goes out to his family, especially dear Pat with whom I was blessed to serve in Girl Scouts many years ago in Provo.*

*Judy Downey Shepherd*

**Judy Downey Shepherd** - June 11, 2016 at 01:42 PM



“ *4 files added to the album New Album Name*



**Willow Griffith** - August 31, 2015 at 05:49 PM

WG

“ 4 files added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Willow Griffith** - August 31, 2015 at 05:45 PM

WG

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Willow Griffith** - August 31, 2015 at 05:43 PM

LB

“ Dear Pat and Family,

*Like so many others, I offer my sincere heartfelt best wishes and prayers for peace and joy, to you and the Family, at this special time of change and personal loss. Jack is such a unique and wonderful individual. Truly one of a kind. You couldn't interact with him without experiencing his unique feelings and effervescence for life. I am sure his "Crossing Over" was one more key aspect of a wonderful life. I know we will see him again.*

*Best wishes for abundant and joy filled memories,*

*Lewis K. Billings*

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**Lewis K. Billings** - August 24, 2015 at 05:39 PM

“ *Pat and Family,*

*It was my plan and intention to attend Jack’s funeral and say this words to him.*

*Abdullahi A. Gallab,*

*Jack Adolph Nelson my dear Jack: al-salaam alikum, peace be upon you. Your great death might have fielded an interruption in a way but it represents a return as well. So, your return, has already started moving about knocking with all the pleasure on things that swing and thrill our lives.*

*Now it is August 2015. Another August 1990, my family; Souad, Ahmed, Azza, Shiraz, and I arrived in Provo. It was early in the morning. While we were getting there, the more we got deeper into what seemed more and more isolated from my comfort-distinguished imagination, the more I felt how serious the lack of knowledge and experience that could help me to reconstitute and explain by means of thought what could expose what we were going to face in the coming future. Nothing could warm the soul more than the Wasatch sunrise. Nevertheless, I was going along the quiet I-15 that morning with a heavy heart asking myself, where am I taking my family to?*

*I called you Jack at 8:00 AM, and a deep, warm embracing soul came welcoming us to a new place and a new experience through the phone. I will be with you in a minute you said. While I was waiting outside the Royal Inn Motel, it rained. Within the Sudanese sense of expectation, that was a good omen. You arrived. That was a beginning of a blend of the most extraordinary experience and promise of our lives. You introduced us to Pat, Willow, Laska, and Jed. Since that day, they, in particular, and your other friends became our family of association in Diaspora. Yours, and their kindness and generosity of heart filled our life with the most profound feelings of human togetherness and pleasure. Pat told me one day that when she saw Souad, my wife, she told a friend “I saw the most beautiful woman in the world but I do not know what she has seen in that Abdullahi.” I did not return the compliment on that day, Pat, but through time I discovered what the noblest person, in the world, Jack, had seen and found in you.*

*You took us that day Jack to see the Provo River. It was silly of me to say to you when we were there, "is this the river you are talking about?" Of course, you understand that at that moment it I was nostalgic to the mighty and majestic Nile. But that was an introduction to a conversation that we got so passionate about, that particular river. A river you "never saw although it was closely akin to as you as one half of your senses." Whenever we talked about that, you visualize those Pyramids on the Nile's banks for centuries with their distant silence and glory. We were so passionate about the desert, the trees, and the ancient theories, assumptions of early histories about the sources of the Nile. Was it coming from the mountains of the moon or from Paradise as one of the Sudanese poet claims? But our biggest dream was to be there one day and walk you through the corridors of the civilizations of ancient Sudan, the temples, the churches, monasteries, and mosques of the place. To show you also how Sudanese people kept for centuries the custom of baptizing life by washing in the water of the Nile the faces of new born children, circumcised boys, bride grooms, pregnant ladies, and their dead and would let them go and be not the least surprised but to see them all happy and cheerful. It saddens me the most this moment, and let me lament that I was not able to honor that promise.*

*Every single Christmas Eve, we were at your home. Even after we left Utah, we kept that tradition by talking over the phone. We have always come together. Although we came to this life from different physics, metaphors, and metaphysics but through each of our own spiritualities, we not only narrowed those differences but we came to the conclusion, once and for all, that God is one, Religion is one, and Humanity is one.*

*This is the song which I will always sing while celebrating your life.*

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**Abdullahi Gallab** - August 24, 2015 at 03:51 PM

SS

“ *The Stevens Family sends our condolences.*

*Daniel Stevens says, "I'm sure he will be missed by many, I always loved that guy. When I was about eight years old I stole something from his barn and he found out about it so he had a private talk with me in the bishops office and I was scared to death he was so kind and loving and he gave me a full-size candy bar taught me a lot. "*

*Nathan Stevens says, "I was his home teaching partner for over a year. I always thought he was an amazing and impressive man. I messed with a lot of stuff on his farm, but he always forgave me."*

*Ben Stevens sends his loving condolences.*

*Molly Stevens says, "I will always remember sitting on his lap when I was a little girl as he wheeled me around and him calling me Molly Malone."*

*Suzee says, "He was always a shining example of Fatherhood. A righteous priesthood holder who blessed my son as a baby. He always made me feel like the person I could be instead of a flawed woman struggling to find her way. I love him. I will miss his earthly presence."*

*We love you Pat, Willow, Laska and Jed. We love you ALL.*

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**Suzee Snedden** - August 24, 2015 at 09:09 AM

HH

“ *Dearest Pat and Family,*

*No finer man than Jack Nelson ever walked the planet earth. You were blessed to have him as the patriarch in your family and I was blessed to call him my friend. May God bless you in his absence, and may you one day be reunited in a magnificent eternal destiny.*

*Sincerely,*

*Helene (Borresen) Holt*

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**Helene Holt** - August 23, 2015 at 11:31 PM

GD

“ Gordo & Bobbee, Marilyn & Dennis purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Jack A Nelson.



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**Gordo & Bobbee, Marilyn & Dennis** - August 23, 2015 at 09:04 PM



Rickard Lindgren

“ One morning, way before the sun came up, Jack and I started out for one of his many favorite fishing places. We arrived soon after daybreak and within a few minutes he was getting bites. As for me, it took almost until noon before any wandering fish took an interest in what I had to offer. Jack simply stated, "you need to have faith that the fish believe you are their friend". Although it has been many years since we fished together, I have always had faith that Jack knew that I was his friend. For certain he was a fisher of men.

*Rick Lindgren*

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**Rickard Lindgren** - August 23, 2015 at 08:26 AM

JH

“ Dear Pat and family... Just returned from a fishing trip to Panguitch Lake where I spent a day on the boat reminiscing about 43 years of fishing and hunting trips with Jack. It was a lovely day and helped me get my mind around Jack's passing.

I am very thankful that I was able to tag along with Jack on all those great adventures.

Besides being a kind and gentle man, Jack was a mentor and a great example of gospel principles for me. Jack taught me two simple but very meaningful life truths... first, a great fishing trip does not always include catching fish, and second... Yerba Mate always taste better when shared with a friend.

We both miss dearly our friend and "partner" and our thoughts and prayers are with you all !

Love, The Herrings ( Jim & Jeanne)

ps. Jack...Que El Senor te bendiga! Hasta la proxima vez que nos veamos! Tu amigo fiel...Jaime

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Jim Herring - August 22, 2015 at 09:47 PM

SB

“ We were sorry to see Jack's obituary, and we send our thoughts and prayers to Pat and the children. We're so grateful that we had a chance to connect those many years ago in Arcata. We have so many fond memories that revolve around the town, HSU and the Nelsons. I'm sure Jack had a lot to do with getting me (Sherilyn) a position on the journalism faculty.

*Jack and Pat made a great team. We admired them greatly. Jack was not only a fine teacher but also a man of talent and enthusiasm. Pat, with her good cheer and unfailing willingness to help out whenever help was needed, was a fine friend, too.*

*All the faculty from those our time there (as well as the students, of course) have moved on to greener pastures of one sort or another, but Jack left a legacy of energy, skill and professionalism that will be remembered.*

*Although this occasion is a sad one, we appreciated the incentive to think back on those good old days and our friends and colleagues.*

*With sympathy and love,  
Ben and Sherilyn Bennion*

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**Sherilyn Bennion** - August 22, 2015 at 07:36 PM

AL

*What an amazing man. I only knew him while I was young, but he was such a good example of being positive, no matter your situation.*

*I learned so much and always felt so welcome when babysitting Willow and Laska. The words 'Mi casa es su casa' typifies the Nelson household.*

*I am so sorry I found out about his passing on the day of the funeral. My heart goes out to Pat and her family at the earthly loss of such a loved one. May you feel the loving arms of your husband and father through the comfort of our Father in Heaven and find more and more peace and strength each day.*

*God bless you in the coming days, months and years,  
Alyson Rowley Larsen*

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**Alyson Rowley Larsen** - August 24, 2015 at 12:33 PM

ES

“*Pat, Willow, Joel, Jed, Laska and kids, You are all in my prayers and I want you to know that I love you all and will miss Jack so much. He called me his little sis and he was like one of my own brothers. Since I moved to Montana I have missed the Christmas Partys and being close to all of you. You all hold a special place in my heart and I am so grateful to have you in my life. Love you all, Edna*

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**Edna Stowell** - August 21, 2015 at 06:15 PM

WG

“*1 file added to the album New Album Name*



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**Willow Griffith** - August 21, 2015 at 01:40 AM


WG

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Willow Griffith** - August 21, 2015 at 01:40 AM

 Donald  
Meyers

“ *I consider it a privilege to have been one of Brother Nelson's magazine-writing students. He was an inspiring instructor.*

*Don Meyers.*

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**Donald Meyers** - August 20, 2015 at 09:53 PM

FM

“ Dear Jack -

*For 60 years I have known, admired and loved you. My days at BYU, and the fond memories of those days back in the 50s and early 60s, are full of memories of you as the focal point of comradery among those privileged to know and have such a close relationship with you. The days of Stalag 161 will forever be cherished in my memory.*

*Knowing you made me feel important. You were 5 years my senior, but much more in terms of maturity and accomplishments. As one of your "room mates" I was privileged to be one of those who got to dance with your date at dances, and they were always the top notch girls at the "Y". I even got to date one of them myself, and you complained that I had "cut your grass" when we became engaged and after my mission I got to marry her.*

*Over the years we have stayed in touch, and have so enjoyed getting to know and love your remarkable wife Pat, and your kids. Whenever we have been in your area, we have stopped to visit, often staying the night with you and going out to eat, first at the Heaps a Pizza and then at the Brick Oven or Mexican. You and Pat have returned the favor and have stayed with us here at our home in California.*

*When Pat called to tell us that you had "leaped over the divide", as you had so aptly put it, we were overwhelmed with grief. I know we have learned from the gospel that this is a joyful event for you, but the thoughts of not having you to be associated with here in this life is very sad indeed. Now at age 80 myself, however, I guess it won't be long before we can continue our close friendship in the realms of our Heavenly Father. Peggy and I so look forward to that day.*

*With all our love, Fred & Peggy Mortensen*

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**Fred & Peggy Mortensen** - August 20, 2015 at 05:46 PM



“ Jack and I met at BYU in 1953. As freshmen we served on the sports staff of the twice-a-week student newspaper, the Universe. During that year (possibly other times, as well) Jack won the BYU Intermural rope climb.

Years later Jack enrolled in the Ph.D. program at U. Missouri when Chris and I were living in Lawrence, Kansas. Jack stayed with us occasionally on his trips back and forth to Columbia, Mo. Even later Jack and I gave seminars for the United States Information Agency to working journalists in Guatemala. We had both learned Spanish as LDS missionaries. Guatemala wasn't at all wheel chair friendly, but Jack and I got along great there. Jack never refused an assignment, or hesitated to go, wherever he wanted to go.

Here's an anecdote: Jack contributed hunting and fishing articles, first as a freelance journalist, then as Inter Mountain correspondent to a major national sports magazine. One summer the editor called Jack and said, "I'm going to Utah, let's get together and go fishing." They arranged to meet in the parking lot close the lake. At the appointed time and place the editor drove up beside Jack's van and said, "Let's go fishing!" Jack opened his door, unloaded his wheel chair and said, "Let's go." The editor was nonplussed. Jack had never told him that he used a wheelchair.

For decades Jack was an articulate voice for and an powerful national advocate for the handicapped. He, as much as anyone, helped shape vocabulary for the movement's public communication efforts.

Over the decades we got together at annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC) conventions. In 2002 I was hired to teach for one semester by the BYU Department of Communications. It was one of the great semesters of my academic life. I was invited to attend "Probability Seminars," at Jack and Pat's house every week. It cost me a few bucks to learn that trying to fill an inside straight had a very low

*probability, but the seminars were well worth the tuition price. And the snacks were terrific.*

*Larry Day*

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**Larry Day** - August 20, 2015 at 04:38 PM

KA

“ *My fondest memories are when the Nelson's lived in our hood on 500 north in Provo. The secluded house barely visible from the road. Your home always felt like it was full of love. It was fun to see all the animals you had. It seemed like a farm. Jack you will be missed everyone in heaven including my mom are rejoicing that your back with them. Hugs to you Pat, Willow, Laska and Jed. Sincerely Kathy Snow Adams*

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**Kathy Snow Adams** - August 19, 2015 at 11:06 PM

CR

“ *Jack:  
I'm very sorry I missed talking with you when Pat called on Thursday, and getting the chance to say, "goodbye." You've been a great and treasured friend over the years. We've had some good times together. Maybe we'll meet again soon.*

*Clair*

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**clair rees** - August 19, 2015 at 09:12 PM

JR

“ *Jack was an extraordinary man. I have always been inspired by his determination to live a full life. I am happy I crossed paths on earth with you & the rest of your family. 🙏*

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**jennifer Koster Robillard** - August 19, 2015 at 01:38 PM