



Joseph Eugene Hopkins

January 29, 1918 - April 8, 2019

St George, Utah – Joseph Eugene ‘Gene’ Hopkins passed away on 8 April 2019 St George, Utah, having celebrated his 101st Birthday in January. He was born 29 January 1918 to Wilfred Bernard Hopkins and Theresa Mary Keenan in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada. He married Mary Michela Ponza of Soquel in Capitola, CA 29 June 1940.

Themes of resourcefulness, pragmatism, and curiosity run through Gene’s life. He was the ultimate recycler. From discarded lumber, motors, tires, and cables, he created rehabilitation equipment for handicapped children, campers for his family, go-carts for his grandchildren, and countless swings and zip lines. His ingenuity brought smiles to the faces of many family members and friends, who at times shook their heads in bewilderment and asked, “What will he think of next?”

Gene’s occupations were as varied as his ingenuity: ranch hand, baker, soldier, painter, contractor, fisherman, real estate developer, missionary, and most importantly husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather extraordinaire.

With the outbreak of WWII, Gene’s cooking skills were put to good use as a Mess Sargent in the 648th Tank Destroyer Battalion, XII Corps, 3rd Army. Under blackout conditions and with limited resources, Staff Sargent Hopkins

delivered hot meals to soldiers on the frontlines of battle in the European Theater, earning the Bronze Star.

Upon completion of his service in WWII, Gene returned to his wife, Mary, daughter, Jeanne, and their home in Redwood City, CA. Following the births of their two sons, Joe and Jon, Gene and Mary pioneered the hills above Soquel, CA. They established a ranch (complete with Gene's trademark swimming pool), and created a home where all were welcome. It was there that Gene and Mary joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Gene spent decades as a counselor in a Bishopric, Bishop, or as a Branch President. Many sought his counsel on spiritual and temporal matters.

Accompanied by his charming, undaunted wife, Gene led a life filled with adventures in service: addressing welfare needs on remote islands in the Philippines, creating micro-loan projects for the impoverished, taking grandchildren to Hawaii, and providing those around him (whether at home or in obscure corners of the world) with a steady supply of homemade donuts.

Gene's determination and independence enabled him to live and to serve his fellowman for over a century. In fact, as he approached his 101st birthday, he was able to renew his driver's license, which allowed him to continue serving in the temple and reading to the infirm. He will be missed by many, both near and far.

He is survived by his 3 children: Jeanne (David Macdonald) of St George, Utah, Joe E (Sophia) of Fruitland, Idaho, and Jon E (Andria) of Roseburg, Oregon. His grandchildren number 18 and his great grandchildren 69. He is survived by his sister Mary Hopkins Messenger of Lincoln, CA. He was preceded in death by his 4 brothers who probably wondered which of them would be last to leave mortality----he was in the middle.

A memorial will be held Saturday, April 20, 2019, at the Fort Pierce Chapel in N. Bloomington Hills at 1 p.m. Military Honors will be provided by American Legion Post 90. Interment will be held in Santa Cruz, CA. In lieu of flowers please donate to missionary endeavors. His family thank many at care centers and emergency personnel for their kind services.

Tribute Wall

LH

“ I met the Hopkins in 1964 when they held dances in the Santa Cruz Chapel on Saturday nights for the teenagers in the wards close by. Gene and Mary were two of the most giving, sweet, wonderful people I have ever met in my life. When we moved from Capitola to Watsonville in 1975 Gene helped my husband paint the inside of our house. My husband was amazed at how fast and well Gene did it. When we were young marrieds in 1973 he would have outings for the young marrieds in the ward and he was so great, we all had fun. I will always remember the kindness of both of them and their giving, sharing manner. My condolences to the family.
Lonnie Hoffseth

Lonnie J Hoffseth - April 28, 2019 at 10:55 PM

KS

“ We in the Brawley Ward, Imperial Valley California Stake, looked forward each year in October for the members of the Bombay Beach Branch to attend our Sacrament meeting one week prior to starting their own meetings at the spa. Gene & Mary we're part of this annual migration. In fact, Gene served as Branch President for 23 years. It was a treat for us to attend their Branch Conference each year because it was one of the few times to get cookies at Priesthood meeting.

We travel to St George often to see family and upon one visit about 18 months ago, we invited Gene to dinner at his favorite restaurant, but he insisted we come to his home where we had a delicious meal with homemade bread and even dessert.

Gene was truly a compassionate, caring man who served others all his life. This was especially evident when he sat by Mary's bedside every day for the many years she was in the care facility. He was a great example of a missionary and temple attendee.

We send our condolences to his family. We were blessed to have known Gene & Mary.

Ken and Shannon Smith

Ken and Shannon Smith - April 19, 2019 at 04:54 PM

“ Gene was my Bishop when I was a youth. My greatest adventure was when he took the scouts on a ten day backpacking trip into the back country of Yosemite National Park. He taught us how to have fun wherever we went. We each were responsible for a meal or two. I brought survival food, the kind the military lives on during their missions behind enemy lines. It sustains life but that is it's only virtue! My world was changed when I saw Gene bring out the gourmet food. We ate like kings in that back country. I'll never forget the chocolate cake with icing. Amazing! As an adult, whenever I was responsible for meals during a camping event, I tried to be as creative and paradigm-shifting as my old bishop. His influence taught me skills and built levels of integrity within me that made me a better father and husband than I would have been otherwise. I even learned the 'Gene Hopkins' method of conquering the common cold—and it works pretty well. My life has been enriched by the sometimes difficult lessons this great man taught me. I have no tongue to express my gratitude for his influence in my young life. I pray the Lord's blessings of peace and comfort on his family in their time of great loss. I look forward to that great reunion day. Paul Gardner 04/17/2019.

Paul Mark Gardner - April 17, 2019 at 08:41 PM

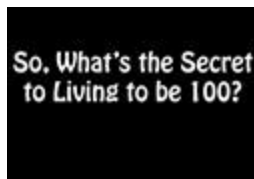
MF

“ Gene Hopkins was kind, practical and hardworking. I recall he shared his lunch with me one day when I didn't have one. He couldn't find a knife, so he used a pair of scissors to cut the sandwich in half. When I was 16-years old and new member of the Santa Cruz Second Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, he was the Bishop and he and his family helped me to feel welcome and feel included. I recall that he had a photo on the wall of his home of he, his wife Mary and Elder Spencer W. Kimball digging clams at the beach. Elder Kimball had his pants rolled up to his knees. When I wanted to earn money to serve a mission for the Church, he found work for me to do. When he was "only" 79, I was re-roofing my home and he came over, climbed on the roof with his nail gun and helped out. After Elder Kimball became president of the Church, he was quoted as saying "My life is like my shoes, worn out in service." The same can be said of Gene. My condolences to the family. Murray Fontes 04/14/19.

Murray Fontes - April 14, 2019 at 08:23 PM

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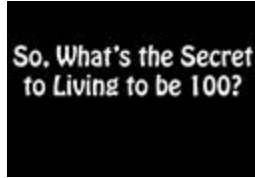
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David Macdonald - April 14, 2019 at 03:33 PM

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David Macdonald - April 14, 2019 at 10:52 AM



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