



Lueli Uiva Teo

October 24, 1935 - February 8, 2016

Lueli Uiva Te'o, 80, beloved husband, father, son, brother and patriarch, passed away on Monday, February 8, 2016, in St. George, UT. He was born on October 24, 1935 in Faleniu, American Samoa to Uiva Taulago Te'o and Inosia Pilimai. He married Alvina Talalupelele Leung Wai in Los Angeles, California in the Los Angeles California Temple on October 13, 1961.

Lueli Uiva Te'o was raised in American Samoa in the village of Faleniu. His parents taught him to work hard, have faith in God and be fearless. He and his brothers were required to do difficult things. Rising early in the morning to work the plantation before going to school and working on the plantation directly after school was standard. Walking to and from the plantation and walking to and from school was no short distance. There was little time to play and no time for idleness. He never complained about his strict upbringing. When he was 16 years old his parents moved the family to California, where he attended and graduated from Mission High School. At Mission High School, he enjoyed playing football. During that time, his Mission High School football team, seen as the underdogs, won the state championship.

Lueli was very competitive by nature and physically active all his life until he was limited by his poor health. He enjoyed running, walking, basketball and tennis. His children have fond memories of playing basketball, tennis and running footraces against him until he was well into his 60s.

Lueli was musically talented. He was in a band with his brothers and cousins, where he played the saxophone and sang. He was also a great fire knife dancer. Lueli was very generous. When people would come to his home asking for fine mats, money or other things, he would give. He helped raise many young relatives who came to stay in his home to work or go to school.

Above all, Lueli was a man of integrity, faith and courage. He had a strong and unwavering testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although a man of few words, he boldly defended truth and right, and never backed down, even if he was the only one defending it. His eye was “single to the glory of God”. He diligently studied the gospel and had a clear understanding of gospel principles. He was gifted in his ability to teach the gospel and spoke eloquently of gospel truth. He lived as he believed, fearlessly and faithfully.

He served faithfully as a missionary in the LDS Samoa Apia Mission from 1957 to 1960. He was in the first group of Samoan missionaries called from the United States to serve in Samoa. He remained close friends with his missionary companions Rudolph Keil and Tigi Manumaleuga up until the end of his life.

He and his wife bought their first home in San Francisco, California. They were members of the Polynesian Ward, where Lueli was a counselor in the bishopric. In the early years of his marriage, Lueli worked in the printing business and was also a milkman.

In the late 1960s, Lueli and his brothers Ima and Ma’a moved back to American Samoa to open up a bakery, “Te’o Brothers Bakery”, in their home village of Faleniu. Lueli was instrumental in getting the land, loan and securing the capital to build the bakery and buy the equipment. Many, if not all, of the Te’o children worked in that bakery. Lueli and his brothers worked tirelessly

and made it a popular success in the 1970s. They also opened up a restaurant, “Te’o Brothers Kitchen”, which also flourished.

In addition to the businesses listed above, Lueli pursued many other business ventures throughout his life and enjoyed the challenge of it. He was fearless, as he was with everything he tried. He enjoyed fishing - he owned many fishing nets and operated a small fishing boat. He raised pigs and cows. He owned a lawn mowing business. He owned an excavator and a portable sawmill, which were used for contract work. However his favorite thing to do was working the land. He was a farmer through and through. He grew passion fruit, taro, bananas, and a large variety of vegetables. He also planted flowers. At his death he left behind a productive pineapple farm, which produces large sweet pineapples. It was his pride and joy. During his last few years he spent many happy hours on his pineapple farm supervising the work and enjoying the fresh mountain air and natural surroundings.

Throughout his life, Lueli’s first priority was serving the Lord and his family. He served in a variety of leadership callings and was a committed father and husband.

In addition to serving as a bishop’s counselor in the Polynesian Ward, Lueli served as a bishop in the Faleniu and Mesepe Wards in American Samoa. In American Samoa he also served as a second counselor in a stake presidency.

In October of 1977 Lueli was called as a mission president for the Samoa Apia Mission during an exciting time in the Church’s missionary history in Samoa. With only a month to prepare, he left behind a thriving restaurant business and moved his wife and six children to Western Samoa to answer the call. He served from 1977 to 1981 and was the first mission president called from Samoa.

During his time there were over 250 missionaries in the mission - the most missionaries of any mission in the church at the time, 90% of whom were Samoans. Many of the missionaries were younger than 19 since local youth could serve right after high school. While serving, President Te'o's seventh child was born - Joseph John Misiona Te'o. Understandably, many of the missionaries that served then still call him Peresitene. Peresitene Te'o was a tough but fair and loving mission president. He often made surprise visits to check up on missionary work. The mission motto was "pray, study, work, work, work."

While serving as mission president, and for some years afterward, Lueli served as interpreter for a number of general authorities speaking at mission conferences, stake and regional meetings and the Samoa temple dedication. His firm grasp of gospel principles and his knowledge of the Samoan language made him an ideal candidate for the job.

After serving as a mission president, Lueli Te'o continued to serve the Lord faithfully. He served as a high councilor, bishop of Aleisa Ward, regional representative and temple sealer. When the Church celebrated its 100 year anniversary in Samoa in 1988, he was called as the chairman of the celebration.

He also served as a stake president of the Apia Samoa West Stake and was the Regional Welfare Chairman. He was a strong supporter of self-reliance and instituted a Farm Fair as a living example of how the saints can use the land and sea to support themselves. He counseled the saints that through hard work and resourcefulness they could become more self-reliant.

In his later years, Bro. and Sis. Te'o served as couple missionaries in their Apia Samoa West Stake. He also served as patriarch of that stake. He was

unwavering in his faith and service.

As a father, Lueli practiced what he preached. Family prayer, family scripture study and family home evenings were the norm. The gospel of Jesus Christ was the foundation of the home. He had high expectations for all his children and always counseled them to: go on a mission, go to college and get married in the temple. All of his children served LDS missions and were married in the temple. Most of them graduated from college. After all his children were married and on their own, he continued to counsel them to remain faithful in the gospel. He also counseled to his grandchildren to go on missions, go to college and get married in the temple. He had a strong work ethic and taught his children to work hard and not be afraid of hard work. There were always chores to do and anyone caught being idle was quickly put to work. He was a strong proponent of physical exercise, good nutrition and education. His children have memories of getting up before sunrise to exercise together as a family. His most fervent wish was that his children have strong testimonies in the gospel and stay active in the church. Today, all of his children are active and endowed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A few days before his death, he gathered his children and grandchildren together one last time and spoke with them. He counseled them to repent and to forgive one another and he advised the grandchildren to go on missions. He also asked his children to take good care of their mother and he repeatedly told them “ia fealofani . . .ia fealofani” or, love one another, love one another.”

Lueli is survived by: his wife, Alvina Te’o; children, William Te’o, Vincent Te’o, Heidi Chipman, April Keil, Melissa Polu, Sinalei Tutagalevao, Joseph Te’o and Pasene Pasene; grandchildren, Ezra Te’o, Jared Te’o, LouAllen Te’o, Ronald Te’o, Joseph Te’o, Melissa Te’o, Maima Te’o, Mattea Chipman, Amanda Chipman, Dallin Keil, Dahlia Keil, Sinalei Keil, Tiare Keil, Jarron Polu, Zekiel

Polu, Cyrus Polu, Jershon Tutagalevao, Heleyna Tutagalevao, Tristan Tutagalevao, Dallas Tutagalevao, Darius Te'o, Kamyille Te'o, Ayvah Te'o, Nimo Te'o, Nevaeh Te'o, Ina Te'o, Bacolod Pasene, Alvina Pasene, PJ Pasene, Catherine Pasene, Odrina Pasene; great-grandchildren; Kealoha Te'o, Ricky Te'o, Roxy Te'o; brothers and sisters, Nafanua Southon, Taimane Te'o, Iemaima Bennett, Tuloa Sanchez, Salamasina Te'o, Benny Te'o, Puao Te'o, Alema Te'o, Lenna Malieitulia, Ralph Mua'e, Marie Ma'o, Tuvaelagi Igafo.

We have established a "Lueli Uiva Te'o Memorial Fund" if you would like to pay your respects in that manner. To donate, call America First Credit Union at 1-800-999-3961. All proceeds will go towards supporting his surviving spouse, Alvina Te'o.

A private family viewing will be held on Friday, February 12th at Serenity Funeral Home, 1316 South 400 East, St. George, UT, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon.

Funeral services will be Saturday, February 13, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at the LDS Stake Center 1762 S. River Road, St. George, UT. Viewing will be from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the same location. Interment will follow the service at Tonaquint Cemetery, 1777 S. Dixie Drive, St. George, UT.

Family and friends are invited to share condolences online at www.SerenityStG.com Arrangements and memorial tree plant are under the direction of Serenity Funeral Home of Southern Utah, 435-986-9100.

Cemetery Details

Tonaquint Cemetery

1777 S. Dixie Drive
Saint George, UT 84770

Previous Events

Viewing

FEB 13. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (MT)

1762 S. River Rd.
St. George, UT

Service

FEB 13. 1:00 PM (MT)

1762 S. River Rd.
St. George, UT

Tribute Wall

RE

“ *Sis. Te'o and family,
My condolences to you at the passing of your beloved husband and father. He was my mission president and helped me through a real tough time in my life. I will always remember him and what I did for me.*

*E moni le tala lelei ma alofa tele atu,
Elder Robert Evans*

Robert Evans - February 14, 2016 at 05:11 PM

PH

“ *To Alavina and the Te'o Family:
We send our condolences at Lueli's passing. He and you, Alavina, have spent your lifetimes in service to the Church and your community. Your lives have touched the lives of countless others, most importantly your own family. We are grateful for the times we were able to spend with you. The Lord bless you always.*

*Love,
Phil and Dawn Hanks*

Phil and Dawn Hanks - February 12, 2016 at 04:25 PM



“ *A great warrior for truth and righteousness has returned home. May the Lord's blessings of peace and comfort be with Sister Te'o and the family.*

Elder Brett Sellers (Samoa Apia Mission 1978-1980)

Brett Sellers - February 11, 2016 at 05:20 PM

M.

“ *May the loving Creator give you comfort and peace at this difficult time. Philippians 4:6,7 in the Holy Bible.*

M.H. - February 11, 2016 at 09:58 AM