



Roger Alan Lawson

April 6, 1940 - April 13, 2022

Roger Alan Lawson was the second son born to Olive Berneice Cox and Paul Wellman Lawson. He was born in Long Beach, California on April 6, 1940. His parents had been unable to have children for seven years. And then, in a miraculous way, both Roger and his older brother Jon were born shortly after Paul and Berneice became members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and were sealed in the Los Angeles temple.

As a young boy, Roger lived on Church Street in Ventura, California for a couple years. Their home was near the open country, which allowed Jon and Roger the opportunity to explore the rolling hills and rough terrain. Together they would set out on explorations with their BB guns. Roger remembers playing marbles as a boy and believes he could “play for keeps” with the best shooters in town. While in grade school, Roger’s family moved back to Hawthorne. They bought a home at 771 East 142nd Street. Over time, his father built a duplex behind their home and his grandparents lived next to them for several years. Roger also enjoyed playing checkers as a youth and won a checkers tournament in middle school.

While in Hawthorne, his father opened a restaurant with his uncle Everett named “Lawson Café”. At first there was just one Lawson Café, but over time his father moved locations and even expanded. During middle school years, Roger and Jon would ride bikes to the café after school and help out by

washing dishes. They would get paid \$0.35 per hour. Sometimes they were allowed to make a batch of soft-serve ice-cream and then fill-up a large soda glass for themselves.

As a teenager, Roger attended Leuzinger High School in Lawndale, California. Throughout high school, Roger attended early morning seminary without missing a single day...primarily because his mom was the seminary teacher. Berneice, or Mimi, taught early morning seminary for 17 years. If the alarm didn't wake up Roger, then the noise of the other seminary students would. Roger was ultimately chosen as the Chairman of the Southern California Seminary Graduation and conducted the meeting which was attended by President David O. McKay, who wore his customary white suit.

While in high school, Roger played basketball and began running track and cross country. In his senior year, Roger was a captain on the track team. Additionally, Roger was elected Student Body President and Senior Class President of Leuzinger High School. While in high school, he won the annual teen-age Road-E-O driving contest his senior year, which his brother Jon won the year before him. Roger always looked up to his brother and considered him to be his best friend.

After high school, Roger decided to attend El Camino College, which was just a few blocks away. While at El Camino College, Roger continued to run track and cross country. He improved his mile time to 4:39. Roger also attended Long Beach State College for about a year before entering the Air Force Reserves. Roger went through basic training and was a loadmaster for the C-130 cargo planes for the United States Air Force. Roger completed his active duty in Tennessee. After returning home from active duty, Roger was re-activated in 1962 and was only days away from being deployed for the Cuban Missile Crises when Russia finally agreed to withdraw missiles.

After being released from active duty in the Air Force, Roger worked at the Oroweat Bakery and then moved to Provo, Utah and began attending Brigham Young University. He attended BYU for one year and then decided to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Roger was assigned to labor in the Southwest British Mission beginning June 22, 1964. During the latter part of his mission, he served as a zone leader over an area which included the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. While on his mission, Hugh B Brown came to visit his mission and shared his talk about the currant bush.

After his mission, Roger returned to BYU. In the spring of 1967, Roger went to a BYU track meet and sat next to a couple girls who lived in Helaman Halls. One of the co-eds was a young woman from southern California named Rayetta Worthington. Roger and Rayetta quickly became friends. Roger went to Alaska that summer for a job but was only there for a few days until he realized his heart was longing for Rayetta and he flew home. As soon as he stepped off the plane in southern California, he brought flowers over to her house. They both returned to BYU in the fall, and then on Valentine's Day 1968, Roger took Rayetta to Bridal Veil Falls and gave her a rose with a diamond ring attached to it. Roger proposed and Rayetta said yes. They were married June 8, 1968 in the Los Angeles Temple and had a reception at the Beverly Hills Hotel. They drove to Utah...flew to New York...boarded a cruise ship for a transatlantic voyage to England...and spent six weeks traveling across Europe on their honeymoon.

Roger graduated from BYU in 1968 with his degree in Recreation Management and a minor in Physical Education. After graduating, they moved down to Southern California and Roger was hired by the City of Los Angeles to be a Recreation Director for the Granada Hills Recreation Center, also known as Petit Park. They had their first child, Sheri Lyn, in December of

1969. Soon after, they had their first son, Craig Alan in March of 1971. Then, on March 25, 1973, Roger was called to be the Bishop of the Northridge First Ward. While Bishop, he helped to raise money and then construct a new chapel on Plummer Street. In January of 1975, Roger and Rayetta had another son, Marc Alan. Then, they were blessed with three more daughters who became known as the “three little girls,” Marci Lyn in November of 1976, Emili Lyn in July of 1978, and Juli Lyn in July of 1980.

In 1980, Roger was promoted to Senior Center Manager of a newly constructed Senior Multi-purpose Center in Northridge, just off Nordhoff Street. Many times, for Family Home Evening, Roger would take his young family over to the Multi-purpose Center at night and play games like hide-and-go-seek, billiards, and laser tag.

In the early 1980's, running was introduced to the Lawson family. It became a major part of their lives for the next 20 years. Roger coached for many years and thoroughly enjoyed being part of the running world. Many holidays and family memories involved traveling all over the US to compete in different events on a local, regional, and national level. Many years later, as a grandpa, Roger would attend races with his grandchildren and offer his coaching expertise whenever the occasion arose. The 1980's also brought another tradition to the family...waterskiing. Most summers included a week-long trip up to Bass Lake where the family would stay in a cabin and spend the days waterskiing, tubing, and eating burgers at Miller's Landing. Coincidentally, the trip to Bass Lake always went through a seemingly unfamiliar city known as Fresno.

But in 1989, Roger moved his family out of the San Fernando Valley and up to the Fresno area. They built a new home and became long-time members of the Fresno 5th Ward and Woodward Park Ward. Roger had planned to continue his career with parks and recreation, but when things didn't work out,

he became a small business owner, and pursued two business ventures: Frozen D'Lites and Sunshine Designs. Being an entrepreneur was difficult, but Roger always found time to take the family up to Millerton Lake for waterskiing and for evening fishing. He spent the last 15 years of his career managing the maintenance of the Edwards Theater on Blackstone. This turned out to be a favorite spot for the grandchildren to watch new releases, eat lots of popcorn, and get movie posters.

In 1997, Roger was called to serve a full-time mission for the church as the Manager of the LDS Fresno Cannery. Managing the cannery was fairly easy until 1999, when the threat of the Year 2000 prompted thousands of residents and members to use the cannery. Then, in 2015 Roger and Rayetta were called to serve a mission together as advisors in the BYU-Idaho Pathway Program.

Roger spent the most time with those things that were most important in his life, namely his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. Family time was what mattered most to him. Saturday mornings routinely found a large group of grandchildren eating "papa's pancakes" and swimming in the pool. Time with Grandpa usually meant playing card games or board games. Even at an old age, Grandpa always carried a deck of cards in his walker. His only regret during the last year of his life, was missing his lifelong helpmate.

Fond memories will linger forever with his children (Sheri and Mark, Craig and Jalynn, Marc and Renata, Marci, Emili, Juli and Rob), his grandchildren (Cody, Blake, Madison, Katy, Andrew, Trevor, Makenzie, Ethan, Natalie, Makayla, Skyler, Chandler, Jaden, Bayli, Ashlei, Hunter, Rylei, Kaitelyn, Addilyn, Jaxton, Abigail, Kayla, Clay, Curtis, Evan), and his brother (Jon and Elsie Lawson).

A Viewing will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Woodward Park Ward 1135 E. Alluvial Avenue in Fresno on Thursday, April

28, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Funeral Services will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Woodward Park Ward on Friday, April 29, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. For those who would like to attend the funeral virtually, a link is provided below for online viewing: <https://zoom.us/j/99291245855>

Committal Services with Military Honors will be at San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery on Friday, April 29, 2022 at 1:30 p.m

To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family of Roger Alan Lawson please visit our Sympathy Store. Please direct floral deliveries to Chapel of the Light Funeral Home no later than Thursday, April 28 before 4:00 p.m.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 28. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Woodward Park Ward
1135 E. Alluvial Avenue
Fresno, CA 93720

Funeral Service

APR 29. 9:00 AM (PT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Woodward Park Ward
1135 E. Alluvial Avenue
Fresno, CA 93720

Committal

APR 29. 1:30 PM (PT)

San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery
32053 West McCabe Road
Santa Nella, CA 95322
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/sanjoaquinvalley.asp>

Tribute Wall



“ *Roger Alan Lawson*

September 15, 2022 at 09:34 PM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Roger Alan Lawson.*



April 28, 2022 at 03:44 PM



“ *We all loved Roger--and Rayetta. We spend many summer days water skiing at Millerton. Roger served as my Executive Secretary when I was Bishop of the 5th Ward. We will miss him, and are thankful he came into our lives.*

Sherm Sowby - April 28, 2022 at 10:39 AM



“ *Love, John and Joan Robison and Family purchased the Blue & White Sympathy Basket for the family of Roger Alan Lawson.*



Love, John and Joan Robison and Family - April 26, 2022 at 11:49 PM



“ Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- Lavender and White was purchased for the family of Roger Alan Lawson.



April 26, 2022 at 01:11 AM



“ Lavender & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Roger Alan Lawson.



April 24, 2022 at 10:47 PM



“ European Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Roger Alan Lawson.



April 22, 2022 at 04:07 PM



“ We have fond memories of the Lawson family. It was a blessing knowing and watching your family grow. Even though most of our friendship was focused around track we did have a few wonderful family get togethers. Love to the family. The Wagenbach's

Kathy Wagenbach - April 16, 2022 at 10:38 PM



“ *Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White*
was purchased for the family of Roger Alan
Lawson.”



April 16, 2022 at 10:26 PM

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“ Roger and I shared many moments together. He provided one of my most genuine and enduring friendships.

We served together in various church callings over probably fifteen years or more. Somehow we couldn't get away from one another.

Through him I was able to get to know much of the awesome Lawson family. I am sure he is so happy to see Rayetta again!

I cherish many memories with absolutely one of the best humans to walk this earth.

I am so glad he got to fly that little Grumman not long ago. The only concern was the look on his face when he had the controls. He smiled and gripped the yoke. And the little plane was quickly put into steep banks and was picking up speed as we were descending!

I kindly asked Roger for the return of the controls. He reluctantly gave them back!

Too much fun!

In his always honest approach to life he admitted that he's a bit of a daredevil.

What a joy he's been to me and my family. And, most importantly, to everyone he's interacted with.

Love you Roger!

Andrew Rahn

Andrew Rahn - April 15, 2022 at 12:04 PM