



James Richard Avati

APR 20, 1950 - AUG 26, 2025



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James Richard Avati

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Surrounded by his loving wife and children, James Richard Avati peacefully departed from this world on August 26, 2025 at 12:34 p.m.

James Avati aka Rick, Jim, Dad, or Grandpa Jim was born April 20, 1950, to James Sante Avati and Jane Hammell Avati. He grew up in Red Bank, New Jersey, and spent his youth surfing the waves of the east coast.

Jim studied at the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts, the Art Students League in New York City, Rick's College, and Brigham Young University. He earned a master's of fine arts from the University of Utah. He was a master sculptor, secured several life size commissions throughout his career, and taught as an assistant university professor.

Jim served as a missionary for the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Los Angeles and South Korea, where he shared his deep faith and love for the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Upon returning from his mission, Jim married the love of his life, Deborra Riddle, on August 31, 1978, in the Washington D.C. temple.

After their marriage Jim and Debbie moved to Utah to pursue further education. They ended up settling down there to raise their family and were blessed with four children, Rebecca (Ryan), Andrew, Melissa (Chris), and Sara (Dallin). Later they welcomed ten grandchildren, Manuel, Megan, Daniel, Claire, Lincoln, Thea, Tori, Jayne, Elsie, and Adelyn.

Preceded in death by his parents, brother Christopher, and sister Laurie, Jim is survived by his wife Debbie, four children, stepfather Robert Myer, siblings Zan, Marghi, Betsi, Sally, Jennifer, and Timothy, and many dear friends, nieces, nephews, cousins and other extended family members.



Obituary

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Jim was generous, honest, hardworking, and sensitive in his art and his life. He was always kind to animals, and loved birds. He deeply felt his emotions, and appreciated beautiful things in this world, including fine art, good books, nature, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had a quick wit, loved long philosophical conversations, had a great sense of humor, and loved to play with his grandkids.

Jim has left a beautiful legacy of integrity, love, deep thought, humor, and faith, which will bless his family for generations to come. While he watches over his family from Heaven, he will be lovingly remembered and deeply missed.

Funeral services will be held Friday, September 5th, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on 1111 E. Charlton Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106 at 11:00 a.m., with a viewing beforehand from 9:00 to 10:45 a.m. For those unable to attend the funeral services in person, a Zoom broadcast has been made available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84479524382>
Meeting ID: 844 7952 4382

Graveside services will immediately follow at Elysian Burial Gardens, 1075 East 4580 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117.

Jim's family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Rachel and all of the compassionate caregivers from the Atlas team.



Events

James Richard Avati

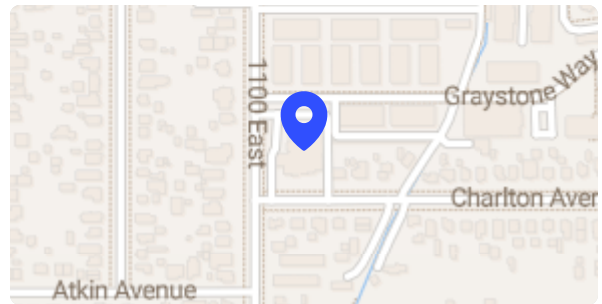
APR 20, 1950 - AUG 26, 2025

Viewing

Friday, September 5, 2025

9:00 AM - 10:45 AM MT

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints
1111 East Charlton Avenue, Salt Lake City UT
84106

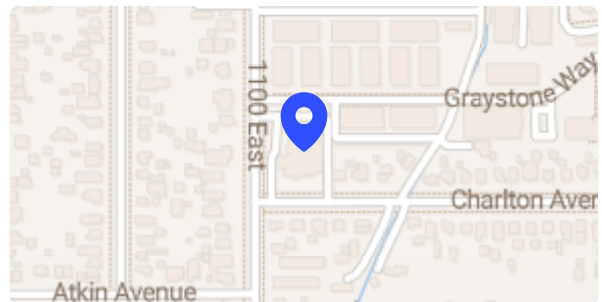


Funeral Service

Friday, September 5, 2025

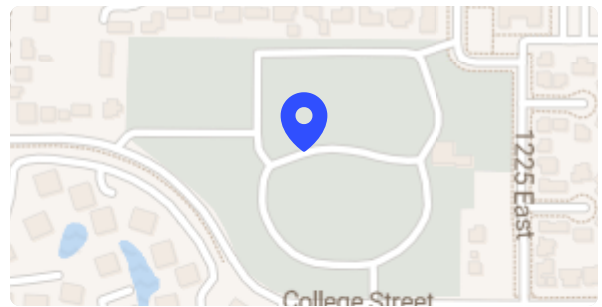
11:00 AM MT

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints
1111 East Charlton Avenue, Salt Lake City UT
84106



Cemetery Details

Elysian Burial Gardens
1075 East 4580 South , Millcreek UT





Tribute Wall

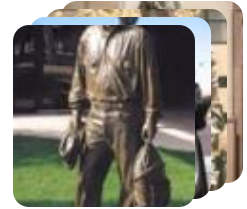
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Eric Felt shared 5 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

For most of us our most meaningful legacy is our family. James would surely agree with that, as he had the privilege of a very loving family. But he also leaves a lasting legacy in his art. His bronze sculptures are remarkable. Here are a few of them. Eric Felt



September 4 at 9:39 PM



Julie Snow posted:

I remember meeting & being with Rick & Debbie in Manhattan during the 1970's. I didn't know them well; they were much younger than I was. Still I remember the gentleness in their relationship & towards me. About a month ago I visited with Debbie in their home. Rick woke up a few times & said a few words while I was there. The Holy Spirit filled that room & our hearts. I felt again their generosity & kindness. I hope for continuing friendship with both of them. Julie Snow

September 2 at 6:27 PM



Amber Cloward lit a candle in honor of James.

Amber Cloward lit a candle in memory of James Avati



August 28 at 1:04 PM



Amber Cloward sent a virtual gift in honor of James.

Amber Cloward sent a virtual gift in memory of James Avati



August 28 at 1:04 PM



Tribute Wall

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Amber Cloward shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I remember every time I would come and hang out and how much he would make us laugh. A core memory of mine was when Jim wanted to use me for a sculpture so I would go stand on the front porch and lawn and he would make me model for like hours and then at the end of it there would be some cool sculpture that usually ended up as a boy because I guess I have those features but I love that somewhere out there I have sculptures of my face and I thought it was so cool that my best friend's dad actually wanted to use me as a model. I absolutely love you guys and there's so many other just amazing memories like going to his studio and just so many other memories and laughs that I have with your family! Love Amber and the Crew P. S. Sorry I couldn't find the photos but these were roughly the age I was :)



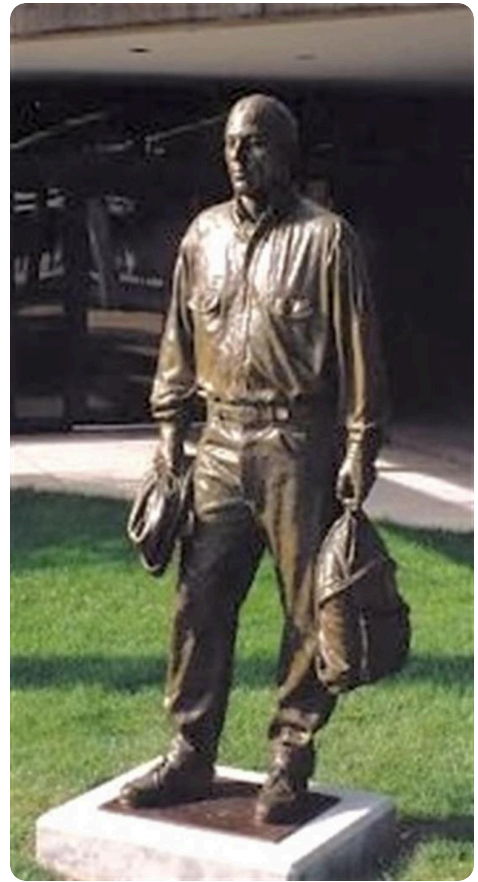
August 28 at 1:02 PM

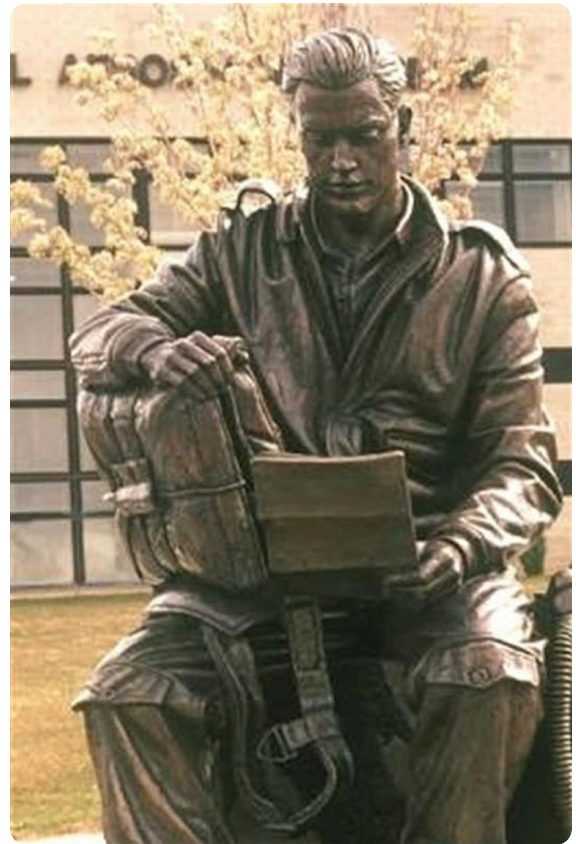
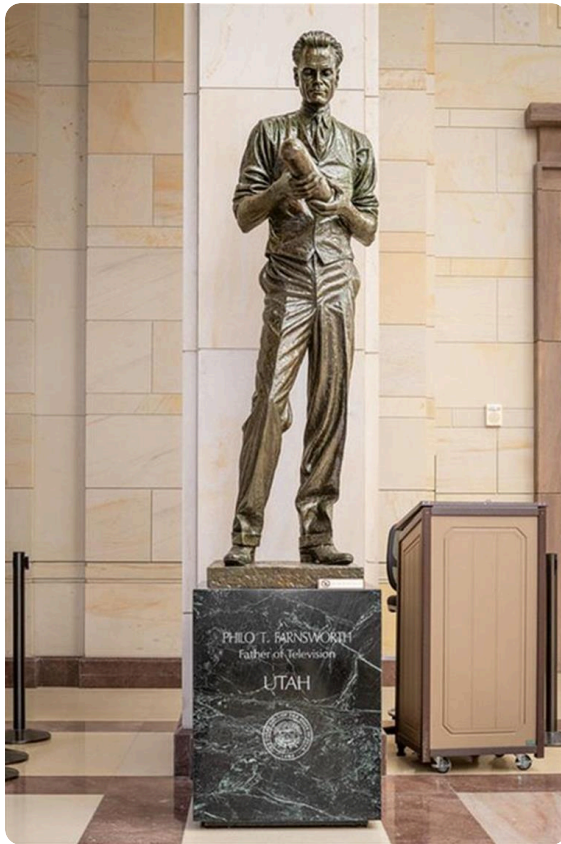


Eric Felt shared 5 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

September 4 at 9:39 PM









Media

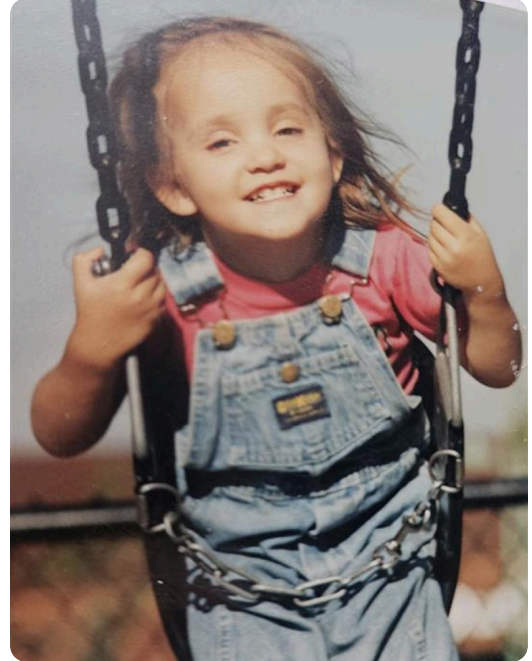
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August 28 at 1:02 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring James by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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