



Joel Graham

JUN 26, 1943 - APR 24, 2026



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Joel Maurice Graham passed away peacefully on April 24, 2026 while in brief hospice

care in Provo, Utah.

Joel was born on June 26, 1943 in Sacramento, California to Maurice J and Phoebe Howard Graham. He was the first of 8 children and following him over the next 22 years were David, Lynn, Ruth, Mary, Glen, Annette, and Paul.

Joel spent his whole childhood in Sacramento and developed a love and talent for music, with many varied performing opportunities. He graduated from McClatchy High School at the age of sixteen. He then spent 2 years at Sacramento City College studying music, where he discovered his passion for choral conducting.

Beginning in 1962, Joel served a two and a half year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Argentina mission. He fell in love with the people and the Spanish language and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

9 days after returning home from his mission, Joel was drafted into the Army as part of the Vietnam war. He served his full two years of military service as part of the Army Band at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. On his first weekend leave, Joel went to a church young single adult Halloween party in St. Louis and met Anne Salmon there and was immediately smitten. They were married three and half years later on June 21, 1969 in the Oakland, California temple.

Joel graduated with distinction from San Jose State College in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in voice and a minor in Spanish, where he also conducted and music directed the college opera of the Ballad of Baby Doe. Then in 1971 they moved to Austin, Texas where Anne taught sociology at



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the University of Texas and Joel joined the Doctor of Musical Arts program focused on choral conducting and finished school with a Masters degree.

Joel and Anne's sons Michael Joel and David Paul were born while they were in Texas, then they moved back to Sacramento to be with family where their daughter Rachael Louise was born. One highlight in Sacramento was in 1980 when he prepared and directed the oratorio "The Restoration" to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was its first time being performed outside of a university setting.

They moved to Riverside, California in 1980 where Joel spent 11 years working as a financial planner (which he started in Sacramento). He also had the opportunity to teach choral music and drama for a couple years at Moreno Valley High School, where he directed and music directed their school musicals. While in Riverside, Joel continued his love for music with many conducting and performing opportunities. Beginning in 1988, he was the founding leader, music director, and conductor for the Inland Empire Mormon Chorale which he loved leading for four and a half years until the family moved to Provo, Utah in 1993.

After moving to Provo, Joel's main focus for work was family history and he worked for Ancestry for a number of years before retiring. One highlight from his time in Provo was singing for several years in the Canti con Brio choir directed by Ron Staheli. It was a thrill for him to sing complex music with other professional level singers. He was also able to lead choirs for a few years at Salt Lake Community College.

Joel loved serving in the church his whole life. He especially loved serving as a bishop for a young single adult ward in Provo. He enjoyed that service even more than leading choirs. He also loved serving as a temple worker. He and Anne served a service mission together as instructors for the BYU Pathway program, both in person and online teaching people across the country.

One of Joel's greatest joys in the last 20+ years has been that of being a grandfather. He loves his 10 grandchildren and they all definitely know it. He was great at playing with and entertaining them when they were little and has been a loving, supporting, safe place for them as they have gotten older. He has been that same loving, supporting, safe place for countless other people, relatives or not, over the years.



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Joel was preceded in death by his parents, Maurice and Phoebe. He is survived by his wife, Anne, his children Michael (Heather), David (Dianna), and Rachael, his 10 grandchildren: Angela, Sophie, Aidan, Lili, Ian, Maddy, Mira, Christian, Collin, and Noah, as well as his seven siblings.

The family would love anyone who knew Joel to share their memories and photos on his memory page at:

<https://www.weremember.com/joel-maurice-graham/8j8k/memories>

Live webcast scheduled to begin on May 01, 2026 at 11:00 AM

<https://webcast.funeralvue.com/events/viewer/121911>



Memories only last if you share them

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



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