



Fred Hightower

July 14, 1941 - January 26, 2020

Fred Hightower's mighty heart ceased beating just before midnight, January 26th. Apparently, he could not tolerate another opening of the Legislature on the 27th--another of what he called "Utah's Silly Season."

Fred was born in Los Angeles months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, to a single 17-year-old mother, Elizabeth (Bette) Harrison (later Hightower and Tatera), who courageously refused to relinquish her boy in the face of extraordinary pressures. Returning W.W. II veteran/career Navy CPO, Frank Hightower, went "all in," marrying Bette and adopting Fred, November, 1945. Frank later died in service in 1950. Fred came into the care of stepfather, Gordon Tatera, whom he loved.

Fred was the dearly beloved husband of Mary Corporon—a burden he endured with humor and grace. He was heard to say he was that most pathetic of all men—one actually in love with his own wife. They married November 11th at 11:11 a.m. in what Fred declared to be "the marriage to end all marriages," and were happily wed 28 years.

Fred was previously married. The less said about that, the better.

Fred was the loving father of Erin (Bill) Firkins and Frank (Shayne) Wilson; brother to Carol Anderson (Mike) and Kathy Garner (Rick); and uncle to their children, Mike, Melissa, Matt and Katie. He was the older ringleader/bad influence to his cousins Theodore, Gary, and Dennis Faure, Diane Rapp, Susie Meyer, Janeen Holman and Judy Clark. Preceded in death by cousin David Newman. Fred was so proud of his grandchildren Christopher (Kylie), Zachary, and Brianne Firkins; of Makaela, Rylie, Karli, Beau, Franky and Katherine Wilson, and of great-grandson, Carlyle Firkins. He enthusiastically anticipated a great-grandson's debut May 2020. Most of these folks are really going to miss him.

Fred, who measured his life in dogs, is also survived by wolfhound, Hudson, and macaw, Moriarty. Preceded in death by many, many good dogs.

Fred served in the U. S. Air Force 1960-1964, in Texas and Spain. He believed the best way to respect military service is to avoid deploying service members, absent a vital national interest and clear achievable mission. He had no patience for political posturing using veterans as props, nor for “Support Out Troops . . . But Only With A Bumper Sticker” patriots. After his own honorable discharge, he became convinced our government was lying about Vietnam. He became active in the draft resistance, working in the lawful appeal process to resist induction of men he represented. He never lost one of “his men” to the Vietnam draft.

After the Air Force, Fred attended Clairemont Community College, San Diego. He was chef in various Pacific Beach restaurants, and later worked for Hughes Aircraft.

A fabulous cook, Fred was also skilled in building trades. After his divorce, he supervised a project on Cat Island, Bahamas. He was employed in San Diego by the Not When The Surf’s Up Construction and Remodeling Company, by dear friend, Gary. Faced with unemployment, he “worked the lettuce” in Steinbeck country in California, during which he was a member of the United Farm Workers. After spending the Cuban Missile Crisis on a SAC base, the next most frightening event of his life was facing down thugs sent to beat striking workers at a farm in central California. He believed that workers need to organize in the 21st Century more than ever.

He came to Utah as facilities manager, head chef and chief bottle washer for Mid-Mountain Lodge on the Park City resort in 1980, with dear friend Larry. He later managed the Park City Hertz agency, and owned Mountain Reception Services with friend, Nick. Fred loved art, movies and the theater. He volunteered in the preservation of the Egyptian Theater and appeared often with the Park City Theater group. His most memorable role was as Mr. Doolittle, Eliza’s father, in the Park City revival of “My Fair Lady.” Later Fred was facilities supervisor for Bass Hotels and Resorts in Salt Lake.

With wife, Mary, he founded Moriarty’s Antiques in 1999. In that brick-and-mortar business, Fred came to believe city, county and state governments inhibit small local businesses. He was an early member of Vest Pocket Business Coalition and Utah Antiques Dealers Association. He has many friends in the antique community nationwide.

Fred studied at the U, 2003 to 2006. He was a voracious reader, and a student of history, especially military history. He visited Civil and Revolutionary War, Pacific and European Theater sites, and wept openly at the sacrifices there.

Fred loved the ocean, the mountains and the desert. He was a hunter and fisher. He was,

he said, “your worst nightmare—a liberal with a gun.” He last fished July 17th on Strawberry, and died planning his next fishing trip. He was, in younger years, a free diver, scuba diver, surfer, water and snow skier and piloted experimental aircraft. He once skied around Point Loma during a small craft warning. He twice ran with the bulls in Pamplona. He travelled the world. He declared he never expected to see 50, and had he known he would live to 78, he would have taken better care of himself. It frustrated him that, lately, all people saw was a feeble old man on a scooter. He wanted his young acquaintances to know that he used to scream down Jupiter Bowl with fresh powder splashing his face, and one day soon they will be on walkers.

Fred was a devout Pastafarian (FSM). He believed the world may become better, but only if we make it so. He was a capitalist businessman who thought those with more have a heavy duty to help the less fortunate and less able.

Fred was honest to a fault, prone to speak the truth when anyone else would tell a “white lie.” Fiercely loyal to those he loved, Fred had no patience for anyone who had lied to him or been willfully cruel to anyone. Fred was amused by humans’ tendency to repeat behaviors and to be confused when outcomes did not change. “WHY does this keep happening to me?” was his favorite response to whiners.

Fred thought Bob Dylan to be the greatest poet of the 20th Century and was gratified the Nobel Foundation finally agreed with him. The lyric he most quoted was:

And here I sit so patiently,
Waiting to find out what price,
You have to pay to get out of,
Going through all these things twice.

Fred paid that price. His old soul has left us, and the world is a much poorer place.

Fred wanted to thank Drs. M. Hecht, Matthew Bryan, Lee Burke and Darcie Gorman, the four chiefly responsible for keeping him alive with a quality of life these past 10 years. He wanted to thank the LDS Hospital ER for efforts in his recent visits; the LDS Hospital Imaging Ultrasound department for many kindnesses over the years; and all the doctors, nurses, aides, therapists and staff at LDS Hospital 8-West for their good work these past months. He was grateful for the care of Canyons Hospice, Intermountain Home Health and St. Joseph’s. He especially wanted to thank those from Unified Fire Department who rescued him four times during the holidays, including Christmas morn and New Years Eve. They don’t pay you people enough.

Fred has been cremated. He apologizes for this carbon load to the planet, but our legislature does not allow human composting, his first choice. (See first paragraph, above.) Fred's wake will be held Saturday, February 15 at Publik, 975 S. West Temple, commencing 6 p.m. Further information and condolences at Premier Mortuary, premierfuneral.com.

Comments



“ To the family and friends of Fred Hightower, I send my deepest condolences to you all. I did not personally know Fred, however, I do know his daughter Erin. May you all have peace knowing that Fred is no longer in pain and no longer is suffering, he leaves everyone else behind to do that.

Rachel



Rachel Annis - February 11, 2020 at 12:30 PM



“ Oh, dear Mary, you would not have been attracted to a man who was not amazing, but it makes the missing so much more acute. Love to you.

Annette Breedlove

Annette Breedlove - February 08, 2020 at 11:43 AM



“ Mary, I'm a bit out of the loop these days and just heard about Fred's passing, and I am so sorry about your loss. It was always an adventure chatting with Fred, and as will many, I will miss Him greatly. You of course have mine and Lyns deepest sympathy.

Dennis Barker

Dennis Barker - February 07, 2020 at 11:57 AM



“ I did not know Fred Hightower, but as an avid reader of obituaries I must say that this obituary recounting his life's journal was an inspiring read. Thank you for writing this obituary with such wonderful sensitivity. His life and this obituary has motivated me to be more kind and caring to others and to try to expand my friendships.to those who are walking on a different path.

Just a guy named Joe,

Joe Watts - February 02, 2020 at 05:03 PM



“ I didn't know Fred or your family, but had the privilege of reading his obituary. I wish I had met him. He sounds like an outstanding, fun loving, and extraordinary fellow. I'm sorry for your loss. I hope that someday, my obituary reads like his; full of activism, service and life experiences.

Phyllis Sorensen - February 02, 2020 at 11:59 AM



“ Mary,
Our deepest sympathies on the passing of our dear longtime neighbor, Fred.
May he now Rest In Peace.
Kevin and Denise Beuno

KDBruno - February 01, 2020 at 11:01 PM