



Paul Earl Duerden

August 14, 1953 - April 29, 2022

Paul Earl Duerden, 68, of Orem, Utah, passed away on April 29 after a brave battle with a rare illness he was not destined to win. He was called home instead to be our loving Angel and forever Father, Grandfather, and not least of all Husband. He fought to the end and did not want to leave this life and his family behind. We all felt his love and wishes for more.

Paul was born in Provo, Utah to Earl Spencer Duerden and Dorene Pheba Lamb on August 14, 1953. He was his mother's beautiful redhead who had fire in his soul and a love for life. He grew up in Salt Lake City, in the Millcreek and Holladay areas. He was the oldest of three brothers. He was the center of things from the moment he began to grow up. He was always out doing and playing with those in the neighborhood. His mom said she would always find him out in a gaggle of girls from the time he was in diapers and then through the rest of his life. He loved sports, camping, scouting, cars, motorcycles and boating as he grew. He went to Skyline High School and competed on the track team and baseball team. He thought about playing pro ball but ended up injuring his throwing arm and had to pivot.

Paul went on a two-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and served in The Northern England Mission. He loved the people, the culture, and the food, especially the fresh yogurt, milk and cheese they sold at food stands. The semester before his mission he attended the University of Utah, however being "True Blue" he transferred to Brigham Young University after his mission. He enjoyed college but enjoyed the social life more. He graduated with a BA degree in Communications and then completed his MPA. The most eventful thing that happened during his years at BYU was finding his eternal companion and sweetheart, Paula Rose Starkey. Like the song, they became the pair Paul and Paula. He started out as one of her home evening brothers and things went from there. He was told by his mother that he had to find a wife by age 25 so that he wouldn't become a "Menace to Society" and he just barely made that deadline by a few days.

Paul and Paula were and are the epitome of the perfect couple. They complete each other so perfectly and set such a beautiful example for those around them. Together for 44 years in August they have three beautiful daughters: Pepper Duerden, Crystal Duerden, and Brandi (Beau) Bowden. These three became Paul and Paula's light and world. He did everything for his family and loved them wholeheartedly. As the years went by Paul was blessed with four beautiful grandchildren as well: Jayden Parry, Jessica Johnson, Elsie Bowden, and Braxton Bowden. He finally got his boy with Jayden and was able to have Jayden in his home for all of Jayden's 18 years. His last days before he went into the hospital he spent playing with the grandchildren and loving his family.

Paul thought he was going to spend his professional career in the Sports world somewhere, but he ended up being an important player in the Arts world. He began working at Brigham Young University managing front of house and box office operations, contracting and scheduling events for the Music Department and Guest Artists. That job began to grow and expand as the years went on. He became involved in theatre and dance. He helped expand programs, bring in world renowned names, and support and grow the budding artists in Utah. Over the years he was able to work with many students at the University and considered each of them one of his kids. He loved working with the students as they kept him young. Paula and the family loved having all of his students in their lives over the years. His two brothers also ended up with careers in the Arts. Bruce is the Technical specialist of the three and Darren is our on the stage Main Event! All three ended up teaching at BYU or BYUH.

After 23 years at BYU, Paul was pulled away to open the Covey Center for the Arts for Provo City. He was handpicked by those who helped get the building built because of his talents and skills. Paul had the building up and running in the Black in the first year. He put on many big-name concerts such as Kenny Loggins, The Beach Boys, and The Oakridge Boys. He also built a black box theatre for the city and has had many beloved productions over the years. At the city, Paul was able to start an Acapella group for high school students and bring in dance teachers to teach dance for all ages. Paul and Paula always wanted to build this kind of a facility and run it together, but it ended up being something he came in and opened for the people of Provo City and Utah County instead. His plan was to retire this Christmas, but now has left the building to the city come what may.

Paul also spent several years in the Air Force National Guard. He loved to ski, though snowboarding found him on the ground more than not. He also loved Disney and passed that love on to his family. A family Disney pilgrimage was made at least once a year since Pepper was born in '79. Some of his happiest days were spent there, making memories with his most important loved ones. We will miss him every time, especially as we look for him to be in That room for One More.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday May 11 at 1:00 pm at the Orem Canyon View Stake Center at 575 E 800 N in Orem, UT. It is the building on the north side of the road. Friends and family are welcome to visit Tuesday May 10 from 6-8 pm at the same address and prior to the service on Wednesday 11am-12:30pm. Interment will be held at the Orem City Cemetery.

Tribute Wall

GK

“ I just read Paul's obituary again and it brought me great comfort. He is truly a remarkable man who brought so much good to so many lives. This all happened so fast that I'm striving to get a handle on it. May we always remember and treasure our memories of this good man and continue the remarkable legacy he left us.

George G. King - May 22 at 10:31 AM



“ I was saddened to hear of Paul's passing. My love and sympathy to your family. I am grateful I got to know Paul over the years at Provo City. I always enjoyed our visits. He will be missed!

Pam Gebhardt - May 11 at 02:51 PM

SG

“ I had the great blessing of working with Paul at the Covey Center for 8 years or so as the dramaturg there. He was always so willing to listen to my crazy ideas and exciting new projects. Then he would blink slowly several times, tell me “what you have to understand” about the Covey, and graciously let me move forward. He loved that little black box theatre and we got to do some amazing shows there. And for a while, he was making cameos in every show! He was generous and kind and encouraging and he had a great sense of humor and so much love for his work family. I will miss him, and the community will miss him, greatly.

Shelley Graham - May 11 at 08:46 AM

GK

“ Pepper what a wonderful tribute you have written to a great and very good man! I teared up as I read it and felt the tenderness that comes from witnessing true and good love. Kudos to you!

May our lives be living tributes to the goodness and fun this good man gave to all the lives he touched.

Heaven is blessed to have him!

George G. King - May 10 at 10:16 AM

KS

“ Paul was my boss and friend at the Covey Center. I remember interviewing with him and Cassie. Everything went rather normally until he asked me if I knew what "Hangry" was. It was funny, and it threw me off. I appreciated him taking a chance on me, as my administration experience was quite old at that time. In retrospect, this chance that he had taken on me, really was the catalyst to launching my professional career, as it stands today. I appreciated his perspective, his focus on people- their situations as well as their wants and needs.

He was incredibly caring and kind. I learned so much from him, too much to articulate here. He was a man of many talents and even more connections. Everyone knew him and he knew everyone. His world was lovely and abstract. He loved his family deeply and made every effort to be present personally and professionally. He was always willing to help in anyway he could.

We kept in touch from time to time after I left the Covey- but he was always someone I felt like I could talk to and rely on. I appreciated his uplifting personality. He had a confidence in me that I often did not have in myself. We cried and laughed together- Lord knows we stressed out together. Paul, thank you for everything. You will be deeply missed. Take care old friend!

*Love,
Katie Rossiter-Smith*

Katie Smith - May 09 at 08:32 PM

JC

“ I loved working with Paul. Years with BYU as director of BYU Theatre Ballet, on the Provo Arts Council and with the Covey Center as I was able to bring in shows since the doors opened at Covey.

He was always kind, honest, fair, and personable. His professionalism was always something I appreciated. He was interested in the people he worked with and genuinely hoped that they would succeed.

I am a better person for knowing him.

I am grateful that we were professional friends.

Much love to his family

*Jennie Creer-King
Central Utah Ballet
Chrysalis Ballet*

Jennie Creer-King - May 09 at 06:23 PM

IG

“ While visiting Paul and Paula’s home he made a spaghetti dinner for mama and I and we played and had fun with the bunny rabbit. The whole house and the yard was completely decorated in Disney character form including the Christmas tree, totally beautiful. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the smile on his face when he hollered for us to come to the kitchen, spaghetti was on. Thanks for the memories Paul and family.

Ina Clevenger Grimes - May 09 at 05:28 PM

TP

“ I always remember Paul as a very kind and fun neighbor hiring me for various things like Woodstock ticket taking over the summer, watching his girls etc. I saw him often in the Harris Fine Arts Center through my years at BYU . He would always acknowledge me! I haven’t seen the family for what seems like ages but I give my condolences and wish the best to Paula and the girls and their children at this hard time. Paul is wonderful person.
-Tabatha Pace Priestley

Tabatha Priestley - May 09 at 04:54 PM

DA

“ Paul had a way of helping anyone he met. He especially knew how to make others feel better about themselves. I was grateful for his kind words during a rough time in my life. He will be missed by so many. My best wishes to Paula and their family during these challenging day.

Deb Auxier - May 09 at 04:38 PM

NW

“ I have worked with Paul as a Dance Studio owner at the Covey from the beginning. He was a wonderful soul and a joy to work with. Sending love to his family at this very sad news. Everyone at Lifehouse Performing Arts Academy will miss him dearly.

Nesha Woodhouse - May 09 at 03:54 PM