



## Thomas Jerold Stirland

April 1, 1934 - September 24, 2020

Thomas Jerold Stirland, husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle passed away on September 24, 2020, in Huntsville, Utah, at the age of 86. Jerold, or T.J. as he was often affectionally called, was born on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1934, in Logan, Utah, to Rulon Godfrey and Louise Seamons Stirland. He was the oldest of six children and lived the first 11 years of his life in Providence, Utah. In 1945 his family moved to Chinook, Montana, where he assisted his father on a farm and helped run their Stirland dairy. Jerold attended Chinook High School and was an outstanding athlete, lettering all four years in basketball and football. He graduated in 1952 and received the award for Outstanding Athlete.

After serving a full time mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Swiss-Austrian Mission, he attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English as well as a teaching certificate and Seminary endorsement. In June of 1958 he married Mary McKay from Huntsville, Utah, in the Salt Lake Temple; they became the parents of four amazing sons.

He taught Seminary in Wyoming, Utah and Arizona and was an Institute teacher at Weber College in Ogden, Utah, and in various locations in Southern California. He moved to Mesa, Arizona, where he earned a Master's degree and fulfilled requirements for a PhD from Arizona State University.

During his college years he had funded himself and his family by working as a paint contractor. Following his years with the Church Education System he became a full-time painter employing his sons and other youth during their summer vacation months. He contracted work with LDS chapels and churches of other denominations, as well as projects for private homeowners and other businesses. No one's paint job looked better or lasted longer than his did. Eventually he branched out into other ventures—placing racetracks in Los Angeles stadium and other outdoor construction work. Always he supervised his sons and nephews during part of the summer months in hay harvesting in Huntsville, Utah. He was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying river running and hunting. His family owned and bred many horses through the years. In addition to his own sons, many

a young man (and some young women) learned a valuable work ethic from him as they hauled hay, ran river rapids, painted and refurbished, learned how to handle a horse and shoot a gun under his supervision.

In retirement he served with his wife for three years as a senior missionary to the youth at Westridge Academy in West Jordan, Utah, literally changing the lives of many young people there. Upon completion of official missionary service, he and his wife settled in Huntsville, Utah, building their large, beautiful dream home—a place where their children and grandchildren could gather. Throughout his life he was a master teacher of youth and also of adults. His entire life he had an eye for missionary service, sharing principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all he met with warmth and happiness using his extensive knowledge of the scriptures and his strong spiritual foundation.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years Mary McKay, his sons Thomas McKay, Ryan Jerold, Darren Rulon (Joy Merrill) and Shaun James (Xenia Driggs) Stirland. He has 18 grandchildren and a growing number of great-grandchildren. He is survived also by his sisters Elaine S. McKay and Diane S. Matthews, sister-in-law Barbara Jill Stirland. He is preceded in death by his parents, his brother William Rulon Stirland, his brother-in-law Elmo G. Matthews and two siblings who died at birth. Graveside services will be held with family in attendance at the Huntsville, Utah, Cemetery.

# Comments

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“ We are so sorry to hear about Jerold's passing. I have great memories of him. We played together on the Chinook High School team when I was a sophomore. I remember him as a great competitor and shooter. He sacrificed a great deal to play football for CHS as well often walking home after practice when he couldn't get a ride. We had a very good basketball team and always were very much in the hunt for a championship. But what made our relationship closer was that we both were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Much later in life we ran into Jerold again when our son Shawn was coaching the BYU men's volleyball team. It was great to catch up on our families and recall old times together. Jerold was a good man and we are so sorry that he has left us. However, The Plan of Happiness gives us the knowledge that we will meet again.  
Love to all,  
Glenn and Bonnie Patchell

Glenn and Bonnie Patchell - October 09, 2020 at 08:15 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nicole Berry - September 29, 2020 at 03:55 PM

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“ 14 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Berry - September 29, 2020 at 03:39 PM

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“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole M. Berry - September 27, 2020 at 04:23 PM

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“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Nicole M. Berry - September 27, 2020 at 04:19 PM

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## “ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



**Nicole M. Berry** - September 27, 2020 at 04:17 PM



“ How wonderful to review some of the life of Uncle Jerold. I loved reading this and wish I could be there to share in paying my respects to him and the family. We will surely miss Uncle Jerold, but feel grateful to have known him and associated with him in this short earthly life. Love--Martha McKay

**Martha McKay** - September 27, 2020 at 11:02 PM



“ I had to share a memory of Bro. Stirland. Growing up in Mesa 9th Ward Bro. Stirland was my Sunday School teacher one year, I was about 14 or 15 years old I think. One Sunday he challenged us to say our morning prayers each and every morning, and he kept challenging us. I remember him taking me aside after class one Sunday and personally challenging me to try this. I had always said my nightly prayers but hadn't done mornings and I guess I didn't see or feel the need. I took his challenge on and it has made a difference throughout my life.

I am so grateful to Bro. Stirland to this day for his taking the extra time with me to do this. I have been faithful at my morning prayers ever since and I have shared this same challenge with my children and with many classes I have taught over the years telling them about my wonderful Sunday School teacher, Bro. Stirland, and how he truly made a difference in my life and I believe his influence has helped those I taught and perhaps others.

Thank you again Bro. Stirland,

Richard Riding  
Now living in Springville, Utah

**RICHARD HAROLD RIDING** - October 01, 2020 at 01:46 PM



“ How the Aycock family loved having the Stirlands kitty corner behind us...and their wonderful, kind, happy examples of service and gospel light. My brother, Duaine was good friends with McKay and I loved working with Sis. Stirland in sports and countless activities. Br. Stirland was a great husband and father and example to us all. We loved our neighbors, the Stirlands!

**Jolene A Hatch** - October 02, 2020 at 02:10 AM



“ I hope that Bro Stirlands "End of life" was not too complicated. I am thrilled to hear that he and Mary got to have a lovely home in Huntsville; a LONG time dream come true for their family. The Stirlands were an exemplary family and sure set an example of hard work, generosity, and finding the positive in any situation. Such happy FRIENDLY people that didn't judge and included everyone. I hope that Mary is still in good health to enjoy her wonderful posterity.

**Kathee Merkley** - October 02, 2020 at 03:42 PM