

# A Final Testimony

*By Jody England Hansen*

This reflection appeared in the tribute issue *Sunstone* published shortly after the passing of Eugene England.

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**M**Y DAD HAS always expressed his testimony in words and actions. He knew a testimony should never be static, but always expanding and growing stronger. Even as his body lost its perpetual energy and strength, he expressed profound belief in the gospel of Christ that grew deeper and richer in the last months of his life.

A week after his February surgery, we were devastated by one doctor's opinion that the cancer was already widespread and Dad had only weeks to live. Yet, while waiting for opinions from other doctors, Dad kept busy giving suggestions for readings for one of his classes, readings that would direct students toward a discussion on leading a truly Christlike life. Dad said, "We don't necessarily live Christlike lives by writing great books or giving fine speeches, or organizing movements or holding high positions. We can lead a Christlike life by taking a grandchild fishing and building feelings of peace and love with them, by being kind and calm with the people we're around each moment."

Dad thought a lot his last few months about acknowledging the Lord's hand in all things. He knew cancer was part of this world that God created, so he acknowledged it. But he also knew the miracle of surviving surgery, of a season of amazing recovery with no evidence of additional tumors. The strength, peace, and comfort he felt was also due to God. Dad believed in the Atonement, this amazing offering Christ made out of love, with no condition. He also knew that God is in all of us—when we choose to help each other, and also when we choose to hurt each other. I know he grew to love all, even those who hurt him, because he saw God in all.

He offered his last testimony a few moments after he stopped his terrible struggle to hang on to this life. We were there with our mom as she caressed his face. For a moment, I looked up, and there he was, of a substance so pure it was as if the air had taken on his shape. He was standing on his legs, with his thick head of hair, and a most calm, peaceful smile as he looked at my mother, then each of us. I tried to smile back. Then he was gone—to form a writer's group with Shakespeare, Melville, Alma, and Austen, to start a world peace inspiration symposium with Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Lowell Bennion, to go fishing again with his dad, to talk to Joseph, Brigham, and Eliza about the real Mormon history, but most of all to be held and healed by those who truly know his heart, his Heavenly Parents and Savior brother. We will see him again. Thank you, Daddy, for this gift of your testimony.

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